ROCK CANDY

FOR THOSE WHO WERE RAISED ON ROCK

April - May 2020

MÖTLEY CRÜE
THE CORABI YEARS

THE DICTATORS
THE FIRST AMERICAN PUNKS

STYX
'PARADISE THEATRE' ARTWORK ANALYSED

DEF LEPPARD
THE MAKING OF 'ON THROUGH THE NIGHT'

NEAT RECORDS
NWOBHM PIONEERS

QUEEN
MIKE TRAMP'S 'INSIDE TRACK'

CALIFORNIA JAM '74
NOW *THAT'S* A FESTIVAL!

BILL WARD

TALKING ABOUT HIS LIFE AND ENDURING LOVE FOR BLACK SABBATH

IRON MAIDEN
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ROCK CANDY

WELCOME

THE BEST BIT OF news I've received of late has been the announcement that Foghat will be playing the Ramblin' Man Fair this coming July. The last time the band played the UK was a very low-key gig back in 1974 at the Rainbow Theatre in London, a date that was arranged to film a live performance for the US-aired *Don Kirshner's Rock Concert* TV show. It was so under the radar that nobody I know saw the gig! I'm hoping Foghat will play the entire set list from their super-successful 1977 'Live' album at what will be, effectively, the band's debut UK show.

Talking of Ramblin' Man, I see relatively unknown US act The Steel Woods has also been added to the line-up. They came on my radar last year and their southern rock sound is a dead ringer for the Outlaws, which immediately got my attention. It's turning out to be an exciting three days of music, which includes Lynyrd Skynyrd, who show no sign of retiring just yet.

It would be remiss of me not to comment on the recent passing of Rush drummer Neil Peart – and we pay tribute to him this issue with a phenomenal live shot by Fin Costello from 1978. Peart was a mind-boggling performer, both on record and live. I first saw him when Rush played a handful of UK shows on the 'All The World's A Stage' tour in 1977. He was the band's standout performer, unleashing a percussive extravaganza like I'd never seen before. These days it's not unusual to be entranced by outstanding technical drumming, but back then Peart's physical and technical assault was mind-blowing.

Talking of drummers, this issue features a rare interview with the powerhouse backbone of Black Sabbath, Bill Ward. He offers some fascinating insights into the band and his enduring love for them, despite the recent acrimony concerning his non-participation in Sabbath's 'final shows'.

Elsewhere in this *Rock Candy Mag* you'll find an engrossing feature written by Jon Hotten about the 1974 California Jam concert; New York underground favourites The Dictators; the making of the 'forgotten' Def Leppard debut album 'On Through The Night'; and the equally unknown history of Neat Records – the trailblazing NWOBHM label that, in many respects, set the entire movement on fire. And let's not forget in-depth interviews with all six members of Iron Maiden, some of whom generally shun the limelight and leave that sort of thing to Bruce and 'Harry'. Enjoy!

Derek Oliver – Master Of Mayhem
derekoliver@rockcandymag.com

THIS ISSUE'S BIG QUESTION – WHAT'S THE BEST FESTIVAL YOU'VE EVER BEEN TO?

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THE TEAM
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Reading Festival 1977. Two stages. Aerosmith, Golden Earring, Uriah Heep, Thin Lizzy and Alex Harvey.
Editor: Howard Johnson
Reading 1982. Budgie, Maiden, MSG.
Editor At Large: Malcolm Dome
Monsters Of Rock 1984. AC/DC, Van Halen, Ozzy, Gary Moore, Y&T, Accept and Mötley. What a line-up.
Art Director: Andy Hunns
Pause Guitare, Albi, France, July 2019, featuring Toto and Scorpions.
Production Editor: Louise Johnson
Pause Guitare 2013, Albi, France. Crosby, Stills & Nash in a forest in the sun.
Creative Direction: Julia Melanie Goode
Reading Festival 1983, the final UK Thin Lizzy gig.
Web Guy: Ross Sampson
Arrow Classic Rock Festival, Nijmegen, Holland, 2008, featuring REO Speedwagon, Motörhead, Twisted Sister, Journey, Whitesnake, Def Leppard, Gotthard, Kansas and Kiss.
Facebook Captain: John Nicholson
Led Zep, Knebworth, August '79. Not the greatest bill, but worth it to see Zeppelin.
Social Media Guru: Michael Brandvold
Milton Keynes Festival, 1989, my first. Bon Jovi, Europe, Vixen, Skid Row.
Lord Of PR: Benjamin Niebla II
US Festival 1983. Heavy Metal Sunday featuring Van Halen, Scorpions and Priest.

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Monsters Of Rock 1987. Metallica and Anthrax and Dio!
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Frontiers Rock Festival 2014, featuring Stryper, Night Ranger and Tesla.
Giles Hamilton
Reading Festival 1983, with my favourite ever band Thin Lizzy.
Jon Hotten
Cumbria Rock Festival 1991. Marillion, Wolfsbane, and fighting in the streets!
Dave Ling
Monsters Of Rock 1984. The best festival line-up ever.
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Monsters Of Rock USA, New Jersey, 1988. Van Halen, Scorpions, Dokken, Metallica.
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Photo: Getty Images/Richard E. Aaron/Redferns

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Editorial@rockcandymag.com

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ROCK CANDY VIDEO PLAYLISTS

THERE'S GREAT ROCK MUSIC ALL OVER YOUTUBE, THE PROBLEM IS FINDING IT. SO LET US TAKE THE PAIN OUT OF SEARCHING WITH OUR EASY-TO-ACCESS VIDEO PLAYLISTS. SIMPLY TYPE THE WORDS IN BRACKETS INTO YOUR YOUTUBE SEARCH BOX... AND ROCK!

FIVE SONGS ABOUT THE WEATHER

Chosen by Howard Johnson

Aerosmith – 'Lightning Strikes' (Aerosmith – Lightning Strikes)
I have a soft spot for the Aerosmith line-up that featured guitarists Jimmy Crespo and Rick Dufay for about five minutes – and this 1982 video shows why. There may be no Joe Perry, but Aerosmith are still addictively sleazy with the two new boys. The video alternates between live performance and segments where the 'Smith try to convince us that they're a mean biker gang complete with flick knives and slicked-back hair. Worth five minutes of anyone's time!

Guns N' Roses – 'November Rain' (Guns N' Roses – November Rain)
Surely the most insanely OTT promo video ever filmed! But then again, nigh on 1.3 billion YouTube views means maybe it was all worth it. The only thing you don't get here is a kitchen sink, but there are extras by the truckload, a live performance from G N' R, a lavish wedding sequence, and a funeral for Axl's 'wife' Stephanie Seymour that's never quite explained. And yes, of course, there's lashings of rain!

Saxon – 'Heavy Metal Thunder' (Saxon – Heavy Metal Thunder (Live) ODSaxon)
Saxon vocalist Biff exhorts us to fill our heads with heavy metal thunder in this quite astonishing live performance filmed for TV sometime around 1980 or 1981. The audience in front of the band seems curiously unmoved by Biff's silver Spandex and what's housed within, while guitarist Paul Quinn appears to be wearing a car mechanic's overalls, the better to help him crank out the song's dominant riff. What's on earth's the matter with these punters? Positively thunderous!

REO Speedwagon – 'Ridin' The Storm Out' (REO Speedwagon – Ridin' The Storm Out (1981))
Filmed in Denver, Colorado at the height of REO's fame back in '81, thanks to some judiciously placed onstage cameras you get to experience what it must have felt like to be on that stage watching thousands of punters go ape for your sh*t. Kevin Cronin and Gary Richrath look ridiculously skinny as they charge up the riffs and let fly. A round of applause, in passing, for drummer Alan Gratzer, whose handwear appears to have been nicked out of Alan Partridge's glove compartment!

Scorpions – 'Wind Of Change' (Scorpions – Wind Of Change (Official Music Video))
Is it really true that whistling can bring down walls? Scorpions say yes – and it would appear 743 million YouTube viewers agree. Of course it's not a real wind the veteran Germans are talking about here, but rather the metaphorical one that saw Europe reunited at the end of the '80s after decades of ideological divide between West and East. Vocalist Klaus Meine would like to think his 'totes emoshe' vocals on this rock ballad classic helped, and looking at the Berlin Wall coming down in the video he may well be right.

FIVE NUMBERS ALL ABOUT MIDNIGHT

Chosen by Malcolm Dome

Judas Priest – 'Living After Midnight' (Judas Priest – Living After Midnight (Official Video))
One of Priest's most successful numbers takes us back to 1980 and a time when songs could be about nothing more taxing than, er, partying all night and very hard. Shot at the Sheffield City Hall in northern England, the rent-a-crowd had, weirdly, been bussed up from the famous Heavy Metal Soundhouse club in North West London. Still, you do get to see a load of said fans playing homemade cardboard guitars, which is always worth the price of admission.

Accept – 'Midnight Mover' (Accept – Midnight Mover)
Don't watch this promo video from 1985 if you've got a headache! Directed by Polish master Zbigniew Rybczynski, it's a whole lot more than a straight live performance, and in fact features Accept in high-speed circular motion throughout. Whether you like it or not, you've never seen anything filmed like this before, which perhaps isn't such a surprise given that Rybczynski won numerous prestigious industry awards for his innovative work.

Iron Maiden – '2 Minutes To Midnight' (Iron Maiden 2 Minutes To Midnight (Official Video))
A classic slice of Maiden, for sure, but hardly the most cheery subject matter. Back in 1984 the band were clearly worried about nuclear war, and methinks Bruce and Co. may still have it on their collective minds today. Don't watch this video if an apocalyptic end bothers you, because it features Maiden mascot Eddie and Beelzebub himself. Not a combination for the faint-hearted.

Cheap Trick – 'Saturday At Midnight' (Saturday At Midnight – Cheap Trick – from Laugh Trax 1982)
Let's be honest, this new wave/dance/rock mash-up track from 1982 album 'One On One' will never feature on a Cheap Trick 'Greatest Hits' compilation. But as a curio showing that Trick weren't always awesome it's well worth a watch. The band are performing on *Laugh Trax*, a short-lived US TV show that mixed comedy sketches with musical performances. It sounds like a flawed concept, and judging by the band's half-hearted showing here, even then they knew it wasn't up to par.

Meat Loaf – 'Midnight At The Lost And Found' (Meat Loaf – Midnight at the lost and found (TV))
Giving it some welly on British TV back in '83, Marvin Aday does his best to inject some Meat Loaf magic into this song from his third album – his first without Jim Steinman. To be honest he doesn't really pull it off, despite the help of Kiss sidekick Bob Kulick on guitar. But the video is definitely worth a watch for the sight of Meat's ill-advised fringe alone, as well as for a bit of excruciating banter with the show's presenter Noel Edmonds after the performance.

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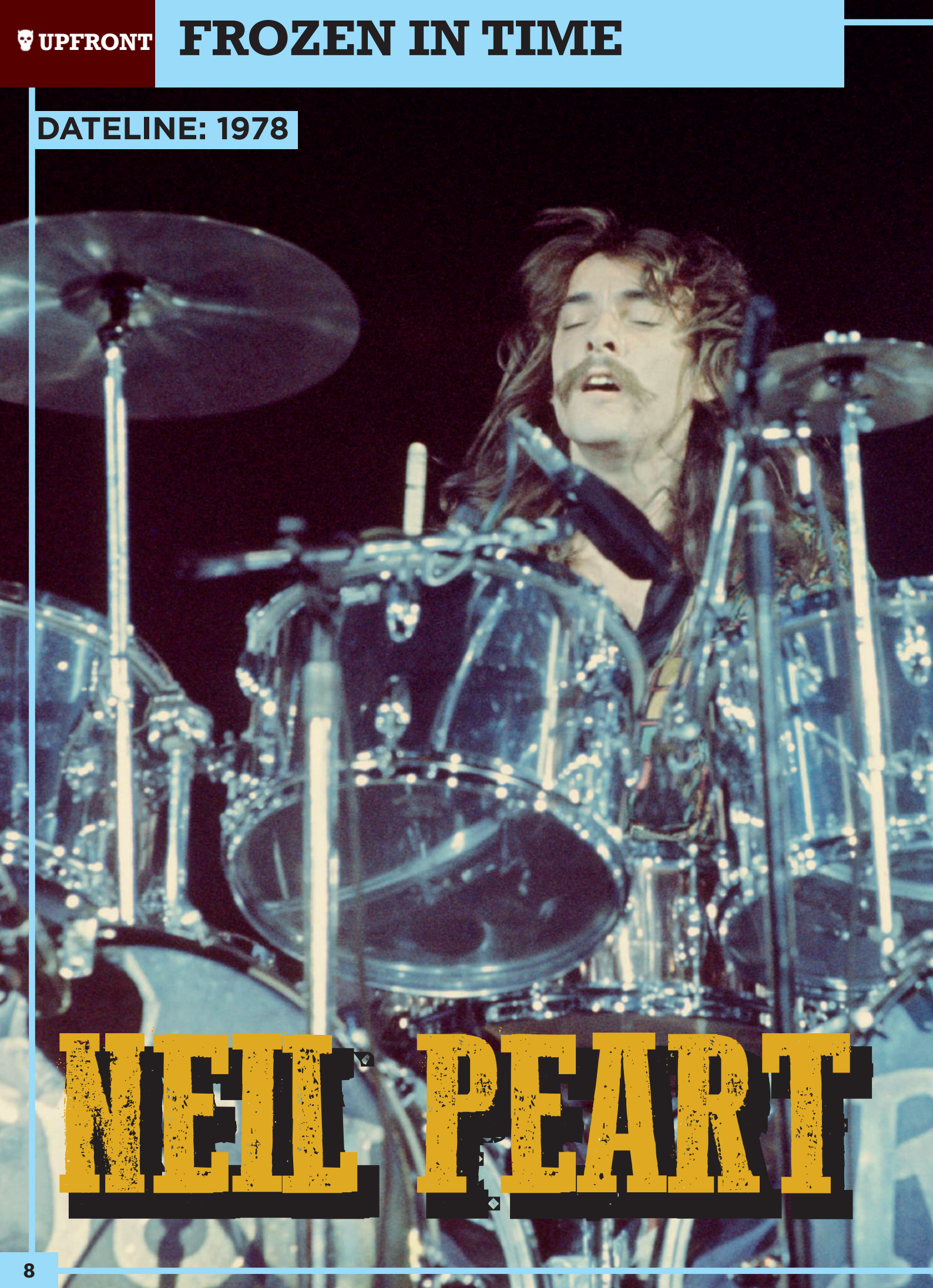


Remembering the incredible drummer who contributed so much to Rush's unique sound...

THE WAY IN WHICH Neil Peart's untimely death from brain cancer was announced on 10 January was every bit as low-key as the man himself. Peart had died three days earlier after a long and private battle against a horribly aggressive form of brain cancer. The band's official website announced the news in just three sentences, explaining how the 67-year-old had passed away, emphasising the family's need for privacy, and requesting charity donations in Neil's name. No doubt the man from Hamilton, Ontario would have approved. Despite being one third of one of the world's most enduring and successful hard rock bands, Peart always flew determinedly under the radar. He was never a man for the limelight. Except, that is, whenever he sat behind his extravagant drum kit.

WHETHER BY accident or design, as a drummer Neil Peart *insisted* that you notice him. His way wasn't to sit up the back, knocking out a solid rhythm to act as a backdrop against which others got the chance to shine. No, Neil Peart was far more integral to Rush's sound than that. His drumming, technically intricate and demanding pretty much all of the time, fundamentally altered what Rush music sounded like. Check out the difference between 1974's 'Rush' – the only album he didn't perform on – and 1975's 'Fly By Night', where he'd first come in to replace John Rutsey. Peart arrived, and suddenly there were endless rhythms, fills and counterpoints to expand the band's sound. Instantly they demanded more of both his fellow players, bassist and vocalist Geddy Lee and guitarist Alex Lifeson, and more of the band's potential audience.

PERHAPS RUSH were lucky that they emerged at a time when fans of rock music were open to the challenge of listening to 'difficult' music. After all, nobody could have called the band 'commercial' in the acknowledged sense of the term. No radio-friendly tunes, no ear-wormy choruses. And yet fans swarmed all over the band's new-found complex musicality and demanding lyrical journeys, again courtesy of Peart. The drummer established Rush's identity and perhaps inadvertently gave Lee and Lifeson the green light to let their own creativity truly take flight. During the 40-plus years of the Lee/Lifeson/Peart axis, Rush's music evolved and changed in profound ways. But Neil Peart's unique, demanding, exploratory drumming was always a constant.

GIVEN THAT Rush came to jealously guard their privacy we didn't actually know it, but when Neil's health started to fade – he was dealing with cancer for three and a half years before succumbing – the band brought things to an end in their usual understated manner. Rush didn't go out with all guns blazing. They quietly drew the curtains and simply let it lie. And at the end, just as it was at the beginning, Neil Peart dictated the tempo...

HOWARD JOHNSON

Photo: Getty Images/Fin Costello/Redferns

STEP BACK IN TIME

JULY–AUGUST 1982

ROCK CANDY'S DAVE LING LEAFS THROUGH THE BACK PAGES OF THE UK ROCK PRESS TO BRING THE BIG NEWS ITEMS OF THE DAY BACK TO LIFE AND ANALYSE HOW THOSE STORIES REALLY PLAYED OUT…

Priest vocalist Rob Halford screams for vengeance at Alpine Valley, East Troy, Wisconsin, 28 August 1982

JUDAS PRIEST ARE MORE THAN METAL

DATELINE: 15–28 JULY 1982

MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

SOME INTERVIEWS ARE GREAT timepieces. Vocalist Rob Halford gave up drinking fully 34 years ago now. But when writer Steve Gett turned up to meet the self-styled Metal God back in 1982, Halford admitted to having spent the previous night knocking back vast quantities of a cocktail known as Russian Roulette following an impromptu jam with a local band called Gypsy Queen. Unsurprisingly, Priest's frontman was nursing a monumental hangover.

At the time, Judas Priest were in Florida mixing a record that the group hoped would break America wide open for them. *Kerrang!* had been granted a sneak preview interview and a playback of music. The Birmingham-based act's eighth studio set, which was released just as this *Kerrang!* piece was published, rejoiced in the title of 'Screaming For Vengeance'. After disappointing sales of previous long player 'Point Of Entry' back in 1981, Halford was only too aware of what was at stake.

"This album's fairly crucial, because we're at a point now where we do stand to become very big in terms of world recognition," he began. "We're big now, but Priest still has a long way to go. To be quite honest I don't really know why the last one didn't do as well as I thought it would. I suppose it just didn't have the correct ingredients."

HALFORD AND Gett sat together listening to a rough mix of the new album, and there were no apologies from Rob when the writer commented on the American feel of a song like '(Take These) Chains'.

"When you want to be world class you've got to write for the world," insisted the singer. "You can't just write for one set of people. And as for us spending a lot of time in America, I think our fans at home are intelligent enough to appreciate that if they were in our shoes they'd be doing exactly the same thing."

'(Take These) Chains' was actually written by an American, Bob Halligan Jr, who would go on to contribute another song, 'Some Heads Are Gonna Roll', on Priest's 1984 album, 'Defenders Of The Faith'.

As Halford headed off for another jam, with local band Roxx, guitarist Glenn Tipton stepped in to counter

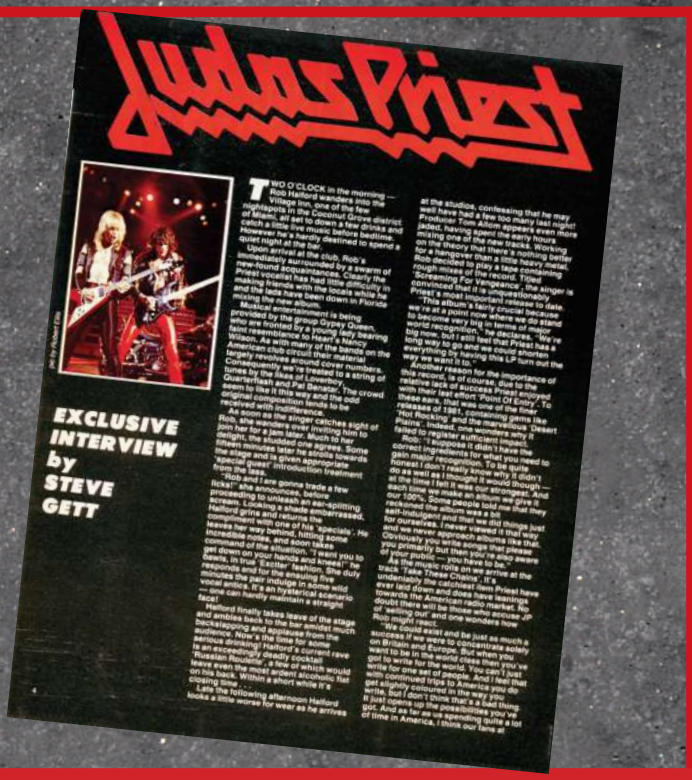
Photos: Getty Images/Paul Natkin; Getty Images/Marc S Canter/Michael Ochs Archives

the suggestion that Priest was steadily becoming Americanised and sanitised.

"We've never deviated from being a heavy metal band," Tipton insisted. "We were always proud to be metal. Some say that metal ignored melody – and that's false. Nobody can ever deny that we've been an out and out metal band, but we've put more into our music than just riffs. We've got far more to say than that."

WITH PRIEST'S backroom team in the process of setting up their biggest ever North American tour, Halford had the final word.

"We start in late July and finish in October, but you have to work extensively because it's such a huge country. Every kid at home believes that if you're in a band like Judas Priest then you're a multi-millionaire, but you're not. We're respectably well off, but in terms of sheer amount of time and effort put in, I'd say that we've put in far more than we've got a return on. Still, at this stage in the game all we're looking for is good music and the money we deserve – that's all. We still get off by going onstage and blowing roofs off."


Judas Priest

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW by STEVE GETT

TWO O'CLOCK in the morning — Rob Halford wanders into the Village Inn, one of the few nightspots in the Coconut Grove district of Miami, all set to down a few drinks and catch a little live music before bedtime. However he's shortly destined to spend a quiet night at the bar.

Upon arrival at the club, Rob's immediately surrounded by a swarm of new-found acquaintances. Clearly the Priest vocalist has had little difficulty in making friends with the locals while he and the lads have been down in Florida mixing the new album.

Musical entertainment is being provided by the group Gypsy Queen, who are fronted by a young lady bearing faint resemblance to Heart's Nancy Wilson. As with many of the bands on the American club circuit their material is largely revolves around cover numbers. Consequently we're treated to a string of tunes by the likes of Lovebuy, Quarterflash and Pat Benatar. The crowd seem to like it this way and the odd original composition tends to be received with indifference.

As soon as the singer catches sight of Rob, she wanders over inviting him to join her for a jam later. Much to her delight, the studded one agrees. Some time minutes later he strolls towards the stage and is given a suitable 'special guest' introduction from the mic.

"Rob and I are gonna trade a few licks!" she announces, before proceeding to unleash an ear-splitting solo. Looking a shade embarrassed, Halford grins and nonchalantly comments with one of his 'specials'. He leaves her way behind, hitting some incredible notes, and soon takes command of the situation. "I want you to get down on your hands and knees!" he growls in true 'Exciter' fashion. She duly obliges and for the ensuing five minutes the pair indulge in some wild vocal antics. It's an hysterical scenario – one can hardly maintain a straight face!

Halford finally takes leave of the stage and ambles back to the bar amidst much backslapping and applause from the audience. Now's the time for some serious drinking! Halford's current rave is an exceedingly deadly cocktail 'Russian Roulette', a few of which would leave even the most ardent alcoholic flat on his back. Within a short while it's closing time.

Late the following afternoon Halford looks a little worse for wear as he arrives at the studios, confessing that he may well have had a few too many last night. Producer Tom Allom appears even more jaded, having spent the early hours mixing one of the new tracks. Working on the theory that there's nothing better for a hangover than a little heavy metal, Rob decided to play a tape containing rough mixes of the record. 'Fever' and 'Screaming For Vengeance', the singer is convinced that it is undoubtedly Priest's most important release to date.

"This album's fairly crucial because we're at a point now where we do stand to become very big in terms of major world recognition," he declares. "We're long way to go and we could shorten it by having this LP turn out the way we want it to."

Another reason for the importance of this record, is of course, due to the relative lack of success Priest enjoyed with their last effort 'Point Of Entry'. To these ears, that was one of the finer releases of 1981, containing gems like 'Hot Rocking' and the marvellous 'Desert Plains'. Indeed, one wonders why it failed to register sufficient interest.

Rob: "I suppose it didn't have the correct ingredients for what you need to gain major recognition. To be quite honest I don't really know why it didn't do as well as I thought it would though — at the time I felt it was one of our strongest. And our 100%. Some people told me that they considered the album was a bit self-indulgent and that we did things just for ourselves. I never agreed. I think we've always approach albums like that. Obviously you write songs that please you primarily but then you're also aware of your public — you have to be."

As the music rolls on we arrive at the track 'Take These Chains'. It's undoubtedly the catchiest item Priest have ever laid down and does have leanings towards the American radio market. No doubt there will be those who accuse JP of 'selling out' and one wonders how Rob might react.

"We should exist and be just as much a success if we were to concentrate solely on Britain and Europe. But when you want to be in the world class then you've got to write for the world. You can't just write for one set of people. And I feel that we've slightly changed in the way we write, but I don't think that's a bad thing. It just opens up the possibilities you've got. And as far as us spending quite a lot of time in America, I think our fans are even shot at a few times. But what helped us keep our feet on the ground was that we still weren't quite where we wanted to be. We wanted to be the biggest metal band on the planet."

ROCK CANDY SAYS...

IF 1980'S 'BRITISH STEEL' broke Judas Priest in their homeland, then 'Screaming For Vengeance' was the album to establish the band on the worldwide stage. From the instrumental scene-setter 'The Hellion' and the banshee-like 'Electric Eye' – a one-two punch that opened both the album and the 1982 live show – right through to the swansong of 'Devil's Child', this was a 10-course feast of heavy metal that North American fans gorged upon. Album numbers 'Riding On The Wind', 'Bloodstone', 'Screaming For Vengeance' and 'You've Got Another Thing Comin'' – the latter a last-minute addition that would crowbar open the door to the American singles chart – all featured when the band played live.

THE TOUR proved to be a major success and was crowned by a legendary Priest appearance in front of 375,000 fans on the Heavy Metal Day at the US Festival in California, on a bill headlined by Van Halen.

"It was a particularly wild time which I came through on a wing and a prayer, although I never let it affect my performances," Tipton told me in 2000. "I consumed a lot of whiskey and cola, upset a few people's husbands, and was

IT'S AMAZING to think that 2020 marks Judas Priest's 50th anniversary, albeit with Tipton having stepped back from touring in 2018 due to Parkinson's disease, and fellow guitarist Downing leaving the group in acrimonious circumstances nine years ago. How nice, though, to see recent photographic proof of Glenn's involvement in the creation of a new studio album – the band's 19th – that's being recorded as part of the band's 50th anniversary celebrations.

The band performing live at Long Beach Arena, Long Beach, California, 22 October 1982

STEP BACK IN TIME

John Elefante fronting Kansas at the Rosemont Horizon, Illinois, 28 November 1983

KANSAS: THE ELEFANTE IN THE ROOM

DATELINE: 29 JULY–11 AUGUST 1982

MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

DESPITE MAKING SOME OF the finest pomp-infused rock of the '70s and '80s, Kansas never really made it big in Great Britain. Maybe it was the band's look, all Grizzly Adams beards and farmhand dungarees. Perhaps it had something to do with the lashings of Robby Steinhardt's violin in their music. Their inability to establish a real foothold in the UK market was more likely down to absenteeism, though. It took Kansas fully five years to play their first British concert, a show at London's Hammersmith Odeon back in 1978. After that they dropped off the UK radar.

WRITER STEVE Gett had attended that gig and called it "very impressive." Four years later he was dispatched by *Kerrang!* to get the latest Kansas lowdown. When he rather bluntly pointed out that the group had begun "to fade into obscurity" with their two most recent LPs – 1979's 'Monolith' and 1980's 'Audio-Visions' – passing "practically unnoticed", drummer and unofficial band spokesperson Phil Ehart was honest enough to agree with Gett's observation.

"We definitely started slipping with 'Monolith', but then again it wasn't as good as either 'Point Of Know Return' or 'Leftoverture'," he admitted, referencing the group's breakthrough records from 1976 and 1977 respectively. 'Audio-Visions', Ehart conceded, had been "a little better, but not much."

Despite these albums barely managing to pass muster, Kansas were refusing to panic. Ehart even went so far as to claim that 'Monolith' and 'Audio-Visions' had still sold a million copies apiece. Official records, however, suggest that the latter only achieved gold status.

"People say, 'What's the matter with you guys? You're not what you used to be.' But there are a lot of bands who'd cut off their hands to do as well as us," Ehart told Gett. "We were still selling out live shows, but to some people that wasn't enough. We knew we were still good and the crowds knew it, but the albums just didn't attain what the previous ones had."

THE ELEFANTE in the room, if you'll pardon the pun, was singer John Elefante, who'd joined Kansas for their new album, 'Vinyl Confessions'. Replacing the much-loved Steve Walsh, the New York-born singer and keyboardist was a Christian, just like guitarist and chief songwriter Kerry Livgren and bassist Dave Hope.

During the conversation with *Kerrang!* Ehart chose to skirt around the subject of religion. When asked why Walsh had left – the singer would soon form the band Streets – Phil insisted that the problems had been "musical". And when Gett asked directly whether the growing religious influence within Kansas had been a factor, Ehart held firm. "No," he said. "Steve was unhappy with where we were going musically. The fact that some of the guys in the band are Christians had nothing to do with it."

Ehart considered the outside influence of Elefante, the band's first member who wasn't from Kansas, to be a positive development for the group. Elefante was brought up in California.

"John's been great for us," the percussionist enthused. "After 10 years things were getting a little bit stagnant, and then all of a sudden John walks in and it just took off."

EHART WAS also adamant that Kansas wouldn't resort to imitation simply to repeat the success of 'Point Of Know Return' and 'Leftoverture'.

"We're not a formula band," he explained. "We just do what we feel like doing."

Perhaps surprisingly, there was even a desire for the rebooted sextet to return to the UK.

"We're ready to come back," Ehart promised. "All we need is the go-ahead from the promoters."

ROCK CANDY SAYS...

WITH ITS EXUBERANT SINGLE 'Play The Game Tonight' denting the US Top 20, 'Vinyl Confessions' certainly halted Kansas's commercial slump. Most likely that had a lot to with the simplification of the band's music. A contemporary review complained that it was "getting hard to distinguish Kansas from Foreigner and Journey." But whatever the reasons behind the band's commercial renaissance, it would be the ongoing issue of Christianity that would eventually be the undoing of Kansas.

After his conversion in 1979, Kansas's chief songwriter Kerry Livgren had dipped a toe into solo waters with the prophetically titled 'Seeds Of Change' album, and his lyrics within the Kansas canon had also become increasingly spiritual. Bassist Dave Hope had become born again in 1980, adding to the Christian leanings of the group building up to 'Vinyl Confessions'. Hope even left Kansas after the album was released to become an ordained Anglican minister, though he has returned to play with the band at various times since.

"I felt the presence of God come down onto me," he told me in 2007. "I was filled with an incredible love that dissolved my heart. I knew immediately that it was God, because I'd never felt such tenderness before."

As the spiritual content of Livgren's lyrics grew, so did the frustration of the non-Christian band members. Violinist Robby Steinhardt exited the group after the release of 'Vinyl Confessions'. In 2007 Ehart explained to me that "Kerry's religion was fine, but he wanted to make Kansas a sounding board for his beliefs."

KANSAS KONFESSIONS

Steve Gett asks Kansas where their glory has gone

Kerry Livgren in action. Those trousers are surely the Lord's work!

THE BAND broke up in 1984. Livgren and Hope formed Christian rock group AD, but Kansas reunited the following year, this time with Steve Morse on guitar. Livgren would go on to have three more spells with the group, while vocalist Steve Walsh returned to replace John Elefante in 1985. Walsh eventually retired from Kansas in 2014. 2016's impressive album 'The Prelude Implicit', which featured new singer Ronnie Platt, was Kansas's first new music since the 'Somewhere To Elsewhere' album back in 2000. A new studio album, 'The Absence Of Presence', will be released at the end of June.

Kansas's British fans have not been spoilt over the years. It took the band until 2005 to come back to the UK for another show in London. And there's only been one other UK date since then. The good news for European supporters is that Kansas will play 13 shows on the continent in October and November, including one in London on 18 October.

US fans have traditionally fared better. In 2019 they were treated to a special performance at the Beacon Theatre in New York, where Kansas played both the 'Leftoverture' and 'Point Of Know Return' albums in their entirety.

Photos: Getty Images/Paul Natkin; Getty Images/Michael Putland

STEP BACK IN TIME

The Tygers Of Pan Tang line-up that recorded 'The Cage'. L-R: Robb Weir (guitar), Richard 'Rocky' Laws (bass), Jon Deverill (vocals), Brian Dick (drums), Fred Purser (guitar and keyboards)

TYGERS BUST OUT OF 'THE CAGE'

DATELINE: 26 AUGUST–8 SEPTEMBER 1982
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

THE DEPARTURE OF A key band member usually causes turbulence. As Howard Johnson sat down to interview the Tygers Of Pan Tang back in 1982, the Whitley Bay rockers were in defiant mood following the exit of John Sykes. The blond guitarist had spent two years as a Tyger, performing on the 'Spellbound' and 'Crazy Nights' albums as they rose from support act to established UK headliners. But the timing of Sykes's exit during the development stages of their all-important fourth album 'The Cage' – and just two days before the start of a tour of France – still rankled.

"Sykes was a fine guitarist and the part he played in the Tygers was large," commented singer Jon Deverill. "But we honestly think that with the addition of Fred we are a much stronger band." The Fred in question was Fred Purser, formerly of punk band Penetration.

"Penetration were a new wave hard rock band with a visually exciting and energetic show," corrected Purser. "With both bands it's just good rock'n'roll. Penetration split because we were torn between heavy metal and new wave."

"Our new material is far more distinctive than previous work – we now have a Tygers sound which we think is different," continued Deverill. "Fred's brought something fresh to the band."

PRIOR TO his sudden exit to audition for Ozzy Osbourne, Sykes had contributed little to 'The Cage', only adding guitar to two tracks.

"We'd been working on a lot of songs with Sykes before he left, and naturally he took those with him, which dropped us in it a bit," Deverill said to explain the glut of covers that filled out the record, including the Leiber & Stoller standard 'Love Potion No. 9' and John Parr's 'Danger In Paradise'. "We couldn't expect Fred to come up with hundreds of songs in three weeks."

IN THE end it mattered little. The results were tuneful, well crafted and, in the case of 'The Actor', full of drama. "Wait until you hear 'The Cage', the latest and greatest Tygers album," Johnson teased. "It's *sans doute* a huge step forward for the group, based around hooks in addition to some heavy duty metal works."

So large was this artistic leap, Howard couldn't resist wondering whether the Tygers might have gone too far. Would original fans feel cheated by the change of style – of "blanding out", as he put it?

"That's just not true," objected a clearly riled Deverill. "Good songs are not bland and every band can be called bland to a certain extent. The bands that never compromise from out and out heavy metal are bland in the extreme. The word 'bland' is just a slag-off used by people who don't understand the subtlety of music, because there's plenty of light and shade on 'The Cage'.

"We've tried to get an atmosphere across on every track so that the numbers last," added the singer. "We can hopefully achieve some kind of durable success – not just a mansion and a Rolls-Royce, because those things are far away. But something that people will respect enough to be influenced by."

Photos: IconicPix/George Chin

ROCK CANDY SAYS...

THOUGH DEVERILL'S AMBITION WAS noble, the Tygers never did manage to acquire that expensive country pile or the fancy automobile. Nor did 'The Cage' become an acknowledged classic. But the fact remains that they still made one of the best melodic hard rock records of 1982 and, for a short while at least, looked like they were set fair for big things after graduating to Odeon theatre-sized headlining status.

If anything, though, the Top 20 success of 'The Cage' proved counterproductive, as the band's label MCA began exerting pressure on the group to use outside writers on a follow-up release. After refusing to do as they were told, the Tygers strutted out of MCA clutching an album of self-penned songs. But to their astonishment they were unable to find a new home.

"We thought we'd just walk into another deal, but of course we didn't," guitarist Robb Weir told me in 2017.

Jon Deverill: "Good songs are not bland"

AFTER MORE than 30 years apart, Fred Purser and Jon Deverill got back together as Purser/Deverill to make a record called 'Square One' in 2018. Meanwhile, the Tygers continue to prowl, Weir presiding over a string of very creditable releases, the most recent being last year's 'Ritual'.

It's been a mixed bag for John Sykes, though. The Ozzy audition turned out to be farcical. Osbourne was drunk when Sykes got there, and there was a mix-up over equipment.

"Ozzy seemed to think I should have brought my gear down," John later told *Kerrang!* "I thought the least they should have done was supply it."

Sykes went on to join Thin Lizzy and then Whitesnake, before putting together Blue Murder. In 1994 he reformed Thin Lizzy with original members Scott Gorham and Brian Downey, handling both guitar and lead vocals, but he gave up the role back in 2009.

In recent years Sykes been very much out of the limelight after signing a deal with Golden Robot Records – then walking away without releasing a note of music.

SNIPPETS – SHORT, SHARP SHOCKS FROM JULY–AUGUST 1982

RON WOOD: "HALF THE TIME I AM PRETTY WASTED"

DATELINE: 15–28 JULY, 1982
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

Rolling Stones guitarist Ronnie Wood admitted that he'd spent half of his life wasted due to nervousness. "And the other half is to feel good," he said. "But it never gets in the way of the music." Wood gave up the booze, except for the occasional glass of wine or beer, in 2010 at the age of 63.

IAN GILLAN CHUCKS A CASSETTE OF HIS NEW ALBUM

DATELINE: 29 JULY–11 AUGUST 1982
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

Ian Gillan was driving down the M4 motorway in England listening to the studio segment of his band Gillan's half-live album 'Double Trouble' when he tore the tape out of the player, wound down the window and flung it into a field. "It was crap!" a furious Gillan told Dante Bonutto. "All the power was missing. The sound had been made acceptable for American audiences. I hated it!"

GARY POOR?

DATELINE: 29 JULY–11 AUGUST 1982
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

Prepping for a tour to promote forthcoming album 'Corridors Of Power', Moore had assembled a stellar band including bassist Neil Murray and drummer Ian Paice from Whitesnake. "If you look at the cats that arrive for rehearsals, you'll see who gets the most money," said Moore. "I came on a bike."

STEP BACK IN TIME

Vocalist Eric Adams and guitarist Ross The Boss shake plaster from the roof of Tuts nightclub in Chicago, 21 July 1982

MANOWAR: "METAL JUST ISN'T MANNISH ENOUGH"

DATELINE: 12–25 AUGUST 1982

MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

MANOWAR INTRODUCED THEMSELVES TO the readers of *Kerrang!* via this 1982 interview, offering up a healthy dose of the ingredients the New Yorkers would soon become associated with – blunt, unapologetic words, cocksure determination, and a zealous approach that verged on the comedic. Guitarist Ross The Boss was disgusted with the state of the US rock scene and his group's so-called rivals. "Everyone's scared!" roared the former Dictators axeman. "The record companies, the radio stations and, top of the list, the bands themselves. They're the ones who are doing all the damage and I don't think today's generation has enough chance to find out the buzz of great rock'n'roll. We're not scared, we don't give a sh*t. But we feel we're taking more of a stern direction – it's our mission."

MANOWAR HAD just released their debut album, 'Battle Hymns', via major label Liberty Records (a Capitol Records subsidiary). They'd also been taken on by Bill Aucoin, the powerful manager who'd guided Kiss and turned them into one of the world's biggest rock bands.

"Bill has the knowledge of how a band should be marketed and I think he was attracted to us because of our originality and the overall concept we had," Ross explained. "I respect him for his business expertise."

None other than actor and film director Orson Welles popped up on 'Battle Hymns', narrating a spoken word passage on a song called 'Dark Avenger'. "We needed an awesome voice and there was only one man in the world who could do it. So we got in touch with his manager and Orson really liked the lyrics," Ross commented. "He came in and did his part in 20 minutes. You can't beat a true professional."

Although 'Battle Hymns' was only a couple of months old Manowar were already thinking about its successor, while also lining up their first UK visit before the end of the year. "We've got level two all planned," Ross revealed. "There's music that makes this album look like Mary Poppins!"

UP TO this point Manowar had only performed a handful of intimate dates while recording the album. Nonetheless, they knew exactly what type of show they wanted to put on.

"A lot of musicians think they're doing the fans a favour by playing. But when we did gigs in Florida, plaster dropped off the roof of the clubs," laughed the guitarist. "It was truly awesome, and we also did great business with the ladies."

Ross laughed when writer Steve Gett remarked that Manowar sounded a little like fellow East Coast band The Rods in their 'appreciation' of the opposite sex.

"The fact is that Manowar is a 'mannish' band founded upon such 'mannishness' – believe me."

"What's mannishness?" asked Gett, not unreasonably...

"Mannishness is something that's gone in this country, and that's basically the spirit we have," Ross explained patiently. "To me, a lot of the great ethics of heavy metal have been neglected. Heavy metal is the most powerful music in the world. It's the most glorious next to classical. Great metal will never die!"

Photos: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

ROCK CANDY SAYS...

FOR ALL OF MANOWAR'S preposterous posturing 'Battle Hymns' still stands up as a laudable heavy metal album. It was made before the band began to take themselves *ultra* seriously, what with the loincloths, signing of record deals in their own blood, groupie buses, and the adaptation of Homer's *Iliad* into a straight-faced 28-minute concept piece titled 'Achilles, Agony And Ecstasy In Eight Parts' on their 1992 album 'The Triumph Of Steel'.

At this stage of their career you could argue that Manowar was a talented, if slightly eccentric band. After all, 'Battle Hymns' was one of the first power metal albums and one of its songs, 'Shell Shock', was definitely ahead of its time in discussing a genuine American social issue. Here a Vietnam vet drinks himself to death while suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. "*If they tell you that I've lost my mind/Maybe it's not gone, just a little hard to find.*"

Manowar, 1982 vintage. Clockwise from top left: Joey DeMaio (bass), Donnie Hamzik (drums), Ross 'The Boss' Friedman (guitar), Eric Adams (vocals)

Yet despite some encouraging reviews – for example Robin Smith of UK music paper *Record Mirror* marvelled, "This is wonderfully over the top; so bad that it's good, if you know what I mean" – the album pretty much sank without trace. And with that, the band's record label, Liberty, unceremoniously dropped them from their roster.

IN 2010 and with Ross 'The Boss' Friedman long out of the line-up (he departed after 1988's 'Kings Of Metal'), Manowar opted to re-record 'Battle Hymns', Christopher Lee lending his voice to 'Dark Avenger' as Welles had died back in 1985. Original members Joey DeMaio and Eric Adams continue to hold the band together today, though suggestions that an ongoing world tour dubbed 'The Final Battle' is set to be their last seem to be misplaced.

If and when Manowar finally decide to call it a day, though, one thing is certain. The world will be a poorer and significantly less metal place without them.

SNIPPETS – SHORT, SHARP SHOCKS FROM JULY–AUGUST 1982

GRAHAM BONNET, NAKED JOGGER

DATELINE: 22 AUGUST–8 SEPTEMBER 1982
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

After being fined for indecent exposure in a London restaurant, a crime he claimed he didn't commit, Michael Schenker Group singer Bonnet protested by jogging nude nearly three miles from Highgate to Camden Lock. Having been apprehended by a policeman who realised that Graham was "a bit drunk", the officer of the law pulled out a fiver and paid for a taxi to take him home.

AIR GUITAR ALERT

DATELINE: 12–25 AUGUST 1982
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

An illustrious panel comprising Rick Parfitt, Andy Summers, 'Fast' Eddie Clarke and Pete Townshend agreed to judge an air guitar competition held at the Camden Palace. Winner Jean-Francois Desbled walked off with a Vox guitar and amplifier, while Debbie Long-Burgess bagged the runner-up spot.

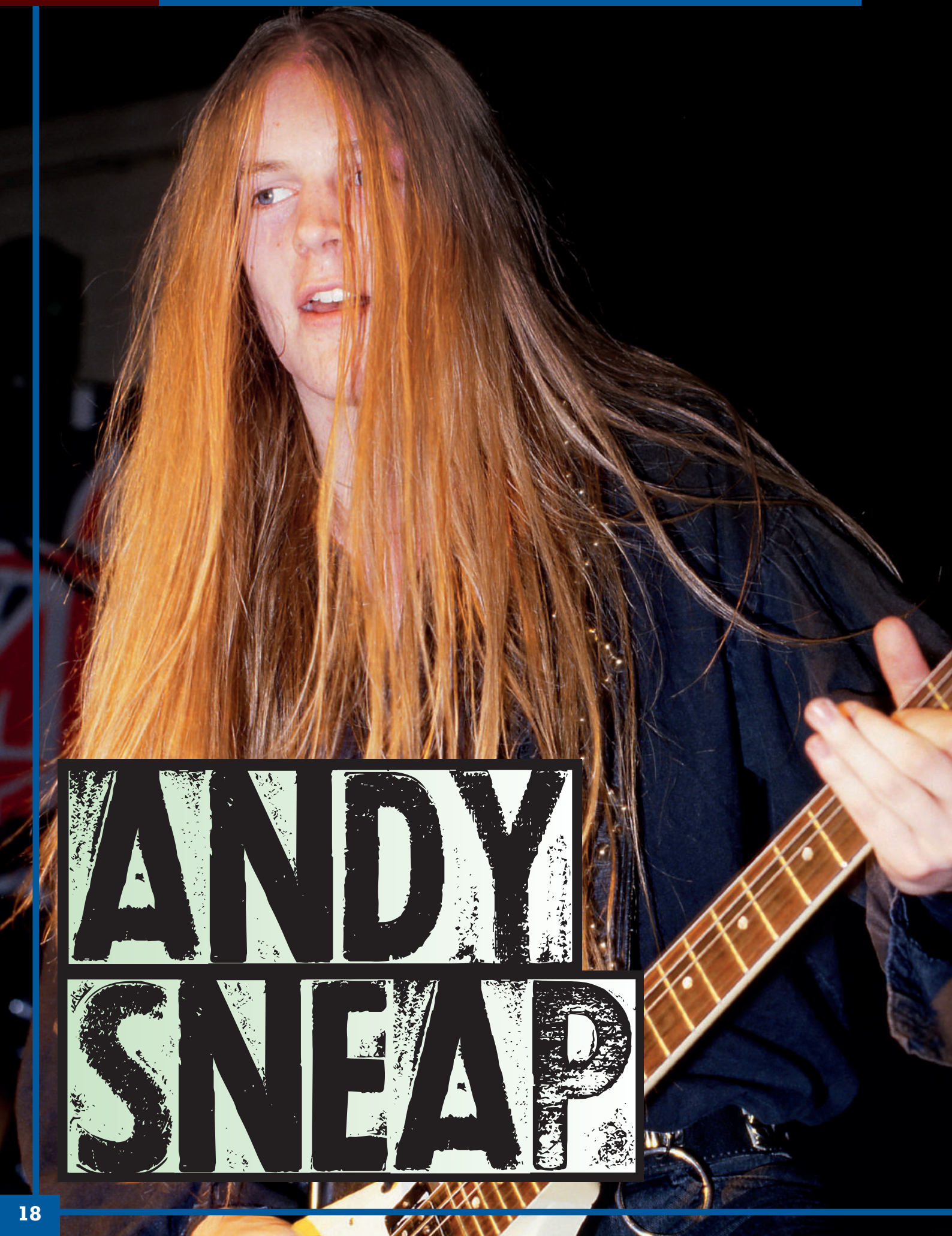
MICHAEL MONROE: "I HATE THE ROLLING STONES"

DATELINE: 15–28 JULY 1982
MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

In an interview to promote their new album 'Self Destruction Blues', Hanoi Rocks singer Michael Monroe told Dave Dickson: "I hate the Stones nowadays. The last good album they did was 'Black And Blue' [released six years earlier]. Everything since then has been crap." Added guitarist Andy McCoy: "I think we're the only rock'n'roll band left."

PERSON OF INTEREST

ROCK CANDY SALUTES THE MOVERS AND SHAKERS WHO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY...



ANDY SNEAP

"I'VE BEEN A VEGETARIAN for 15 years and now wear leather from head to toe playing in Judas Priest," laughs Andy Sneap. "So go figure that one out!" That's not easy, of course, but figuring out the overall career trajectory of this affable guitarist and producer is equally tricky. In truth it's hard to think of anyone else in the music industry who's ended up not only producing one of his childhood favourite acts, but also *joining* the band. It sounds like a dream come true, and in many ways it is. But Sneap's joy at being up on stage with the self-styled Metal Gods is obviously tempered by the circumstances under which he finds himself standing alongside Rob Halford *et al*.

BACK IN 2014 Priest founder member and guitarist Glenn Tipton was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. According to the specialist who made the diagnosis, Tipton had had the affliction for more than a decade, but it was only in February of 2018 that the news was made public. At the time Sneap had been working as co-producer on the band's 18th studio album, 'Firepower', and given his previous history as a guitarist in his own right, it seemed natural that he would be asked to consider replacing Tipton for live shows.

"It'd be great if Glenn was up there doing it," Andy said on the *Talking Bollocks* podcast. "That's always in the back of my mind. It's just nice that Glenn asked me to fill in. And as long as Priest want me to help out, I'll help out."

SNEAP'S JOURNEY from metal-obsessed teenager to performing onstage with one of the genre's undisputed legends is nothing if not noteworthy. Born in 1969 in Belper, Derbyshire, Andy first took up the guitar at the age of 12 and now describes it as "a Godsend, because I wasn't doing well at school. The guitar gave me something to focus on." The process wasn't all plain sailing, however.

"I wouldn't say I'm the most natural guitar player," he admits. "You sit next to Richie [Faulkner] in Priest and he's just a monster, phenomenal. I have to work at it and hammer the information in. I enjoyed it, though, and trying to learn something at that age was a lot easier than it would be now. In my last year at school they got a 'careers advice' guy in to give us some guidance for the future. They asked everybody what they wanted to do and I said I wanted to be a heavy metal guitar player. Everybody laughed at me – and they got me a job at the local slaughterhouse across the road from the school! But I've always looked at things with the attitude of, 'If someone's done it, then there's no reason why *I* can't do it.'"

Andy joined his first band, Hydra, in the mid-'80s, playing Venom covers and originals. The band's singer was Martin Walkyier and the group eventually changed its name to Sabbat. From the band's earliest days Andy found that he was fascinated by the recording process.

"The first time I realised I had an interest in it was when I was watching [TV presenter] Jools Holland interviewing Sting when The Police were doing the 'Zenyatta Mondatta' album," he says. "Sting had a drum machine and his bass, and he was working with a four-track. I thought it was amazing that you could do things separately and then combine them. Putting sonics together has probably always been more interesting to me than live work, really."

Sabbat signed a recording contract with German-based indie label Noise Records, and between 1988 and 1991 recorded three albums before sinking under the weight of band debt and creative differences. Interestingly, Andy only had a hand in producing the third album, 'Mourning Has Broken', and only then as part of a group effort.

AFTER SABBAT imploded, Sneap thought he was done with groups and playing live, and given that he was broke he realised that he had to find a way to make money.

"I went and sold guitars for two years and thought I was out of the creative side of the business," he admits. "Eventually, though, I got into live sound and production. It was a natural step – I had studio experience, it allowed me to be musically creative, and I was able to see a bigger picture."

Having started out producing local punk and hardcore bands using an eight-track reel-to-reel machine, Andy eventually graduated to working at a 24-track studio in Nottingham called Square Centre, learning alongside producer Colin Richardson, who was already involved with major metal acts including Fear Factory, Machine Head and Napalm Death. Sneap's big break came when he travelled to San Francisco alongside Richardson to mix Machine Head's second album, 'The More Things Change...' for Roadrunner back in 1997.

"I was lucky," he says. "Not many engineers were focused on metal at that time and a lot of the metal labels needed someone with my skill set." Andy believes it's his ability to make great-sounding records and deliver them on time and on budget that has kept him in production work for more than 20 years now. His reputation as a 'go to' metal producer means his Backstage Recording Studio has flourished and it's now located on a 16th century fully-residential 15-acre farm. With credits to his name including Megadeth, Accept, Testament and Exodus, there's no doubt that Andy is a modern day metal production legend.

Yet despite his production commitments, he also found time to play in the reformed band Hell, originally put together by vocalist Dave Halliday. Halliday had taken Andy under his wing as his guitar teacher, but sadly committed suicide back in 1987. Helping propagate the Hell name gives Andy a means of honouring his mentor.

WITH WHAT seems like an endless appetite for both work and music, Andy Sneap shows no signs of slowing up. New projects working with Saxon, Accept and Kreator are keeping him busy, and that's not to mention the fact that he'll be in the studio with Judas Priest this March and April before the band head out on tour between May and December. It's clear that the world of heavy metal would be a poorer place without multi-faceted Andy Sneap.

"The best thing about my life," Andy explains, "is that I don't have to rely on other people. I steer my own ship – and that's what's most rewarding."

Words: Howard Johnson. Photos: IconicPix/Buffo; Getty Images/Mick Hutson/Redferns

CLASSIC ALBUM SLEEVE

STYX
'PARADISE THEATRE'
DATELINE: JANUARY 1981

Artist **Chris Hopkins** (*right*) remembers creating the sleeve of what would be the Chicago band's only US number one album...

"I WANTED TO BE an artist when I was a kid growing up in Oregon. I was drawing from a very young age and remember selling pictures I'd done of monsters to other kids in my class at school. I ended up going to college in the '70s to become a wrestler of all things, though I dropped out in 1974 before drifting through a number of random jobs. But all the time I was drawing as well.

"Eventually I decided to apply for the prestigious Art Center College Of Design in Los Angeles, and was amazed when I was accepted! But despite graduating top of my class it was hard to get work.

"I FINALLY got a break when I was hired to work at a firm specialising in illustration out in Santa Monica called Willardson & White. One of the company's clients was A&M Records, and one of A&M's clients was Styx.

"We had the band's 'Paradise Theatre' project to work on, but my company bosses had to go to Japan on business, so they left me in charge of it. I was 26 years old at the time and it was only the second job I'd ever done after previously putting together just one movie poster.

"I didn't have any direct contact with the band members. All of my direction came from Chuck Beeson, who was in charge of design at A&M, and from Derek Sutton, who was the band's manager. They were pretty prescriptive because they knew what they wanted. They told me about the idea of having two paintings of the same theatre, one in its heyday and one when it was dilapidated. It was only much later that I found out that [Styx keyboardist and singer] Dennis DeYoung was using the theatre as a metaphor for general American decline. I was given a stack of reference material, with the most important being a serigraph [silkscreen print] by a Chicago artist called Robert Addison featuring the city's Paradise Theater that had opened back in 1928. I also got a pre-release cassette of the album to get a feel for the mood they were trying to create. That really helped me.

"ONCE I had the brief I was allowed to get on with the work, which I produced in acrylic using a combination of airbrush and paintbrush on illustration boards. There were a lot of layers of approval with the record company, the band and the manager, but I had a great relationship both with Chuck and Derek so it wasn't too painful. When I delivered the two finished pieces of artwork everybody must have been happy, because from that point on I was bombarded with requests for ads, single sleeves, and billboards for the 'Paradise Theatre' campaign.

"This ended up being the only project I ever did for Styx. They went to someone else for their next album, 'Kilroy Was Here', and I was a little disappointed, but they wanted a different look.

"I WAS satisfied with what I did at the time, but of course there are things I'd do differently now. I suspect I'd do the work as oil paintings, but it's natural that your views change as you get older. All in all I'm very happy to have worked on 'Paradise Theatre' and am pleased that people remember my artwork all these years later.

"The weird thing is that despite producing this sleeve I never met any of the members of Styx. I came close once when I was invited to go backstage after one of the band's shows in LA. But there was some kind of mix-up and security didn't have my name on the list, so they wouldn't let me through! So near and yet so far!"

Check out more of Chris's great work at ***www.chrishopkinsart.com***

Interview by Howard Johnson. Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

"Everything is consistent between the two paintings of the building's heyday and the one of its dilapidated state. There are no fundamental changes to the building itself. At one point there was a sign on the dilapidated version announcing another establishment taking over, but I took it out because it was too confusing."

"The Paradise typeface here was actually provided by one of LA's top lettering designers, Ted Witus, but the stone nymph figures are mine. I wanted something in the middle there to tie in with the rest of the building, with the gargoyles I'd painted elsewhere."

"I painted the band logo and surround separately, because the original painting was in a 36" x 40" format to accommodate posters. They needed the lettering and surround to work for a 12" x 12" album sleeve. I chose these colours because I felt they went really well with the underlit night time scene here."

STYX
PARADISE THEATRE
PARADISE
GALA PREMIERE
A.D. 1928 • ROCKIN' THE PARADISE • STATE STREET SADIE • TOO MUCH TIME ON MY HANDS • THE CARES • SNOWBLIND

"I knew that for the piece to work there needed to be lots of different light moods. It was all part of the process, making sure that there was a good balance of light everywhere, particularly between the top and the bottom of the painting. It wasn't too complicated, actually. Once I had the initial drawing done everything fell into place pretty quickly."

"I thought that the entrance to the building needed to look livelier, so did some research into ads and film posters from the 1920s and then painted these."

"The 10 above the main entrance was a specific request made by Dennis DeYoung, though I was never told exactly why. I guess it was because 'Paradise Theatre' was the band's tenth album."

"I decided to do the cars and people as silhouettes with monochrome colours, because otherwise there would have been too much competition for the eye. I thought that would somehow take away from the 1920s art deco feel I was after."

STYX – 'PARADISE THEATRE'

Released: 19 January 1981. Album length: 40.37. Produced by Styx. Engineers: Rob Kingsland and Gary Loizzo.
Recorded at Pumpkin Studios, Oak Lawn, Illinois, United States.
Of Note: Side two of the original vinyl was laser-etched with the Styx logo and nymphs, matching the record label design.

1. A.D. 1928 (1.07) – Dennis DeYoung
2. Rockin' The Paradise (3.54) – Dennis DeYoung/James Young/Tommy Shaw
3. Too Much Time On My Hands (4.31) – Tommy Shaw
4. Nothing Ever Goes As Planned (4.46) – Dennis DeYoung
5. The Best Of Times (4.17) – Dennis DeYoung
6. Lonely People (4.38) – Dennis DeYoung
7. She Cares (4.18) – Tommy Shaw
8. Snowblind (4.58) – James Young/ Dennis DeYoung
9. Half-Penny, Two-Penny (4.34) – James Young/Ray Brandle
10. A.D. 1958 (2.31) – Dennis DeYoung
11. State Street Sadie (0.27) – Dennis DeYoung

LINE UP:
Dennis DeYoung – vocals, keyboards
Tommy Shaw – vocals, electric and acoustic guitars, vocoder
James 'JY' Young – vocals, electric guitars
Chuck Panozzo – bass guitar
John Panozzo – drums, percussion

YOU COULDN'T MAKE IT UP!

INSANE TALES FROM THE ANNALS OF ROCK

Judas Priest photographed in Las Vegas, January 2002. L-R: Ian Hill (bass), Scott Travis (drums), KK Downing (guitar), Tim 'Ripper' Owens (vocals), Glenn Tipton (guitar)

DATELINE: 1996

Singer Tim Owens goes from Judas Priest tribute band to fronting the real thing

THE CRAZY TALE OF HOW A SUPERFAN FROM OHIO ENDED UP IN THE GROUP HE'D IDOLISED FROM AFAR…

THE YEAR IS 1982, and a 15-year-old from Akron, Ohio is about to experience the first of two life-changing moments. When his older brother comes home with a copy of the new Judas Priest album, 'Screaming For Vengeance' under his arm, it doesn't seem like a seminal moment to Tim Owens, but that's exactly what it is.

"That was it," Owens later told *Cleveland Scene* writer Denise Grollmus. "I was done. The singer – Rob Halford – was just so versatile. I remember hearing him change his voice. It was like he was singing in different characters. I became a fanatic and bought everything."

Owens wasn't alone in that. In '83 the British band was riding a tidal wave of US interest in heavy metal music. 'Screaming For Vengeance', featuring the breakout single 'You've Got Another Thing Comin'', had made the Top 20 on the *Billboard* US album charts and turned Priest into a major draw, especially among America's blue collar workers. Owens fit the demographic. His dad was a warehouse worker, after all. And while the young Tim had started out more obsessed with sport than music, hearing Priest for the first time lit a fire in his belly.

His route to the top wouldn't be easy though. Married with a baby girl at just 19, Owens initially made ends meet working as a clerk at a local law firm, while indulging his passion for rock at weekends singing in a covers band called Dammage Inc. Their repertoire included numbers by Priest, Slayer, Iron Maiden and Metallica. The band eventually evolved into Brainicide, an act with pretentions to presenting original material. Bar crowds wanted to hear big rock hits of the day, though, and Brainicide withered on the vine.

WITH HIS musical aspirations thawted, Owens gave up for two years and got divorced before a covers band named US Metal came calling. "The money was good," is Owens's not unreasonable explanation as to why he took the gig. But the need to scratch a more creative itch led the singer to quit US Metal to form Winters Bane, an originals band that eventually landed a deal with a small German label, Massacre Records. The group recorded a concept album, 'Heart Of A Killer', in Germany, but playing original material in the US Midwest was still like pushing water uphill.

To make some worthwhile money from music, Winters Bane decided to put together a Judas Priest tribute set under the name British Steel. "We actually opened for ourselves," Owens told Denise Grollmus. "First we'd play as Winters Bane, then get changed and play as British Steel. It was either play for $50 or $1,000."

So far, so normal. But as metal's star waned in the face of grunge's onslaught in the early '90s, Owens decided to quit British Steel in 1995 and throw his lot in with a grunge covers band, cringingly called Seattle. He had only one gig left to fulfil with British Steel, by

Words by Howard Johnson. Illustration by Christophe Sénégas Photos: Getty Images/Scott Harrison

coincidence at the same club where he would perform with Seattle the following night. Unbeknown to him, though, the girlfriend of Judas Priest drummer Scott Travis filmed that British Steel show and passed the tape on to Travis.

At that time Priest had been off the radar for five years. Rob Halford had quit in '91 and, despite auditioning any number of singers, the band had failed to find anyone good enough to replace him. Travis received the video of British Steel's performance in February of 1996, and this proved to be Tim Owens's second life-changing moment. Just days later the singer was flying to a studio in Wales to try out for the band he'd recently been paying homage to in his tribute group. Two quick-fire performances of Priest classics 'Victim Of Changes' and 'The Ripper' later, Owens was employed as the new Judas Priest singer, and given his new nickname. The fan had joined the band.

From superfan to super frontman. Owens gives it some metal with Priest

WITH THE press salivating over this classic rags-to-riches story, Tim 'Ripper' Owens was suddenly big news. He recorded two albums with Priest, 1997's 'Jugulator' and 2001's 'Demolition', though he wasn't asked to be part of the writing team, "so there was no money." What did transpire, though, was that Owens's incredible story had caught the attention of Hollywood. In 2001 the movie *Rock Star* appeared, based on Owens's own tale and starring heavy hitter Mark Wahlberg. Although Priest dissociated themselves from the final movie and Owens's new wife Jeannie dismissed it as "funny as sh*t" and "so far from the truth," it did at least cement the Tim Owens saga as one of the craziest tales the music business has ever thrown up.

Judas Priest eventually reunited with Rob Halford in 2003 and Owens's day in the sun was over. "I've always said that Priest needed Rob back," says Tim. "It was a smart decision for everybody. Bands need the original line-up."

OWENS HAS since gone on to work with other known metal acts including Iced Earth and Yngwie Malmsteen's Rising Force, and currently performs as a solo artist, as well as with Dio Disciples, celebrating the music of Ronnie James Dio. It's hard to imagine Owens ever escaping his reputation as the fan who joined the band, though his talent as a metal singer shouldn't be underestimated.

"World-class singers are seriously rare," says former Priest guitarist KK Downing, who worked with Owens during his time in the band. "You can count them on one hand and still have fingers left over. And Ripper is a world-class vocalist, just legendary."

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

BIZARRE MEETINGS WITH BIZARRE ROCK STARS...

"That old decoy trick sure fooled everyone last night, eh boys?"

BON JOVI

Dave Reynolds tells the tale of how he was used as an unwitting **Bon Jovi** decoy back in Germany in 1993...

IT WAS AUGUST OF 1993, the month before Bon Jovi were scheduled to play two headlining UK shows at the National Bowl in Milton Keynes. I'd been dispatched to Germany to cover the New Jersey quintet's return to Europe for a *Kerrang!* feature, and my brief was to capture the band's thoughts as they reconvened the mammoth 'Keep The Faith' tour at the Waldbühne amphitheatre in Berlin.

Is this who Jon Bon Jovi was going to play golf with?

JON BON Jovi – as courteous as he'd always been to me – had to be in the right mood to sit down and engage with the media. Although I'd spoken to his four bandmates ahead of the gig, I still had to get hold of Jon. A chat at dinner after the show would have been too distracting, apparently, but thanks to the sterling work of PolyGram PR lady Shelley Clark, my early morning flight back to London the next day had been rescheduled. A meeting with Jon had been arranged over breakfast in the hotel dining room.

All went well over tea and toast, and as I was making my way back upstairs to pack after my interview I was approached by a Bon Jovi crew member who told me that I didn't have to book a cab to get to the airport. The Bon Jovi team had arranged for me to get a ride with one of the drivers at the band's disposal. I just needed to be in the lobby at a certain time for the pick-up.

I MADE sure I was *in situ* at the appointed hour. Suddenly there was a flurry of activity as the various band members appeared and were quickly ushered into a fleet of cars that had arrived in front of the hotel. I was told to jump into the last Mercedes in the convoy. As the vehicles began to speed away I noticed that a number of fans who'd been milling around outside the hotel hoping to get a glimpse of their heroes were rushing to get in their own cars to give chase.

It soon became apparent why my car was the last in line. As he executed a number of moves that would've been considered suspect even on a race track, never mind a regular German road, my driver made it clear that his specific job was to block any attempt by the pursuing fans to get past us and follow the band to their eventual destination – which I'd now been told was a local golf course. The car swerved from lane to lane, tyres squealing as my fearless driver ignored all road etiquette and focused on his task of making sure JBJ and his pals could shake off their pursuers and grab an uninterrupted game of golf.

It was like being at the heart of a Hollywood movie car chase! The experience probably only lasted a couple of minutes, but it seemed much, *much* longer. The man at the wheel of my car managed to avoid hitting anyone – or anyone hitting us for that matter – and with the 'real' band cars disappearing into the distance we eventually continued on to the airport.

OF COURSE it would have been easy for my driver to employ his blocking tactics without a passenger on board, but it suddenly dawned on me exactly why I'd been told to get in the last car. My long blond hair, clearly visible in the back seat, was a deliberate decoy for fans trying to follow Jon so they would inadvertently follow the wrong person – me! So as the band prepared to tee off at the golf course in peace, I was left to deal with four girls who'd followed a Jon Bon Jovi doppelgänger all the way to the British Airways check-in desk!

Imagine their disappointment when they realised I wasn't Jon Bon Jovi after all!

Photos: Getty Images/Paul Natkin; Getty Images/Stan Badz/PGA Tour

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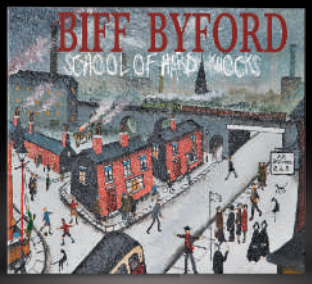

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CRÜE-CIFIED!

As the ill winds of grunge blew many a trad rock band off course at the start of the '90s, vocalist **John Corabi** was given the unenviable task of replacing Vince Neil in quintessentially '80s rockers **Mötley Crüe**. It proved to be an uphill struggle. *Malcolm Dome* talks to Corabi about his tough times as a Crüe member...

BACK IN 1991 VOCALIST John Corabi was working his butt off with LA hard rock band The Scream. Their debut album, 'Let It Scream', produced by Eddie Kramer, had garnered some favourable reviews, and despite the dark clouds of grunge gathering on the horizon there were reasons to believe that The Scream were on the way up. 1992 held real promise...

"We'd been on the road for seven or eight months by then," explains Corabi today. "Our label, Hollywood Records, had told us we should start to think about writing songs for the next album. But before that they'd lined up a show for LA radio station KNAC. The gig was due to be broadcast from The Marquee in Orange County. And there were even plans for a full UK and European tour with LA Guns and Love/Hate in the pipeline.

"*Spin* magazine had just done a big feature on Mötley Crüe with [bassist] Nikki Sixx on the cover," remembers Corabi. "Someone gave us a copy of the magazine, because in the article Sixx had said how much he loved The Scream. We all read it and were so excited that he even knew who we were!

"The day of the KNAC show I decided to call Mötley's management office to leave a message for Nikki thanking him for mentioning The Scream. I talked to a girl called Stephanie, who worked for the band's manager, Doug Thaler. She was cool and polite and took down the message, as well as my phone number. I was just about to leave for The Marquee when the phone rang. My wife

Photo: Getty Images/Mick Hutson/Redferns

Mötley Crüe photographed in 1994. L-R: Tommy Lee (drums), John Corabi (vocals and guitar), Nikki Sixx (bass), Mick Mars (guitar)

answered it and told me I should take the call. I told her I'd be late if I took it, but she insisted. So I picked up the phone – and who was on the end of the line? [Drummer] Tommy Lee and Nikki Sixx! And what they had to say would completely change my life. They told me that [vocalist] Vince Neil had literally just been fired and asked if I'd be interested in coming down to audition for Mötley and jamming with them with a view to replacing him. I asked when they wanted me to come and they told me the following Monday. It was already Friday! They also told me that this was totally secret and that I couldn't tell anybody. Obviously I agreed, but all the same felt that I had to tell my own manager about what was going on. When I called him he said I had to go for it, because this was the chance of a lifetime. I knew what he was saying, but the truth was I wasn't even a Mötley Crüe fan! At the time my collection was full of albums by Grand Funk Railroad and Led Zeppelin, that sort of thing."

There has been talk since the event that Stephen Shareaux of the band Kik Tracee was considered for the vocalist's slot. Shareaux himself even said that he met Mötley at their rehearsal space, but Nikki Sixx disputes this. "One or two others could have been mentioned," he insists. "But the only person we met was John."

"I GOT the gig after doing two auditions," confirms Corabi. "One with just the band and a second with the management and label there as well." Once he'd accepted the position as singer in Mötley Crüe in February of 1992, Corabi was offered the terms under which he'd be employed.

"When it came to songwriting and publishing I was told I would be on the same terms as everyone else," he explains. "I wouldn't be cut in on monies made from touring and merchandising and would simply be on a salary, more of an employee, really. But that was fair enough, because Mötley was one of the biggest bands in the world and those guys had worked hard to get to that position. There was talk of eventually making me a partner over two or three phases. They wanted to

DARK DAYS

do things that way because they also wanted to make sure I was the right person for the band, personality-wise. They'd become pretty unhappy with Vince and his attitude over the previous couple of years, so part of the process of integration was just the four of us hanging out a lot together, taking motorcycle trips, just so we could get to know one another properly and that they could be sure I was the perfect fit."

THINGS APPEARED to be gelling well and over the course of 1992 and 1993 the new Mötley Crüe line-up started to work on an album with producer Bob Rock, who'd been behind the sounds of 1989's 'Dr. Feelgood', the band's most successful album up till then.

"It was such a smooth process," recalls Corabi. "Honestly, it couldn't have been easier. The four of us would go down to the rehearsal room five or six days a week and sit there for six or seven hours jamming out ideas. One person would start something off and we'd all sit in a circle developing the idea into a song structure.

"I'll give you an example. On 'Til Death Do Us Part' there's a really brilliant two-note intro. You know how that happened? Nikki's bass tech was messing about in front of the amp and Nikki thought he'd scare him, so played these two notes really loud through the speakers. Well the roadie jumped out of his skin, but Tommy, [guitarist] Mick Mars and I were really impressed with what Nikki had done. We got him to play it again, Tommy added a Zeppelin-style drum pattern and suddenly we had this great track. Happy accidents like that kept happening to us all through that period."

"I WASN'T EVEN A MÖTLEY CRÜE FAN! AT THE TIME MY COLLECTION WAS FULL OF ALBUMS BY GRAND FUNK RAILROAD AND LED ZEPPELIN, THAT SORT OF THING."

LEGEND HAS it that the band members, who'd established a fearsome reputation as hardcore party animals over a number of years, had decided that a new beginning with a new vocalist demanded a new approach. The first album with Corabi was supposedly done under a strict regime. No drink, no drugs, no cigarettes, no red meat, and visits to the gym every day. Corabi says the reality was somewhat different...

"We had a meeting set up one afternoon with Bob Rock and his engineer, Randy Staub. The night before, Tommy and Nikki went out to dinner with their wives. Both were supposed to be on the wagon, but they thought one glass of wine wouldn't hurt. But then the one glass turned into a bottle, then more bottles, then the Jack Daniel's came out... and before long they were ordering coke to be sent to the restaurant.

"The following day they were both still trashed. Before our meeting with Bob and Randy, Tommy was doing shots of tequila and other stuff, and was giving me a hit or two from the bottle as well. By the time Bob and Randy turned up in the afternoon I was buzzing a little, but Tommy and Nikki were completely off their heads. So Bob called our manager, Doug Thaler, and told him there was no way he was going to produce the new album with the band in that state. We were supposed to do part of the recording at A&M Studios in LA and the rest of the work would happen in Vancouver up in Canada. But Bob was really worried that being up at Little Mountain Studios in Vancouver, where there's quite a party scene, would ended up killing the guys!

"So Doug got on the phone to everyone, read the riot act and told Tommy and Nikki that they had to cut out this craziness. Did it work? For a little while, but I have to admit that there were some slip-ups in Vancouver. That album wasn't done without a lot of partying. I admit that I like the occasional drink. I'll happily have three or four cocktails, then head to bed. And the next morning I'll spend time in the gym. But I certainly wasn't into the drug culture. On the other hand, it wasn't unusual for Tommy and Nikki to be on three day benders!"

WHETHER OR not the band were fresh and healthy, group leader Sixx says he was determined to take the Crüe in a new musical direction on the album, a direction that reflected the way in which rock music was being transformed by the arrival of grunge.

"I remember that we were on MTV shortly after Nirvana released the 'Nevermind' album," Sixx once told me. "I held up their cover and said it was the future of rock. Everyone expected me to burst out laughing, because they were convinced I wasn't serious, but I meant it! We had to take on board these new musical ideas – or die."

The changes that Mötley instigated in the wake of grunge's immense impact resulted in an album that sounded rawer and a little heavier than anything they'd previously recorded. And for a short time at least, it seemed like everyone who mattered was fully behind

Photos: Getty Images/Mick Hutson/Redferns; Getty Images/Ron Galella Collection

The Crüe attending the annual American Music Awards in Los Angeles, 1993

'Mötley Crüe', with a release planned in March of 1994.

"Bob Rock told us he believed the album was as good as the Metallica 'Black Album' he'd produced," recalls Corabi. "And Bob Krasnow, who was the president of our label Elektra, flew us to New York, where we sat in a room while the album was played back to all the major people from the record company. Afterwards Krasnow told us we'd made 'a f*cking masterpiece', and Elektra were going to go all out to promote it. He even said that the idea was to do for Mötley what Epic had done for Michael Jackson, by spending millions of dollars to produce an incredible video for the track 'Misunderstood'."

It all sounded great, but despite such initial enthusiasm the wheels on the bus quickly began to fall off.

"WEA was the company in overall control of Elektra," explains Corabi. "Bob Krasnow had given massive deals to Anita Baker, Natalie Cole and Anthrax – and they'd all flopped. So Doug Morris, the chairman of WEA, apparently told Krasnow that if our album didn't *debut* at number one, then he was out."

On its release, 'Mötley Crüe' 'only' came onto the US album charts at number seven. While this no doubt wasn't the only reason why, Krasnow was soon heading out the Elektra door.

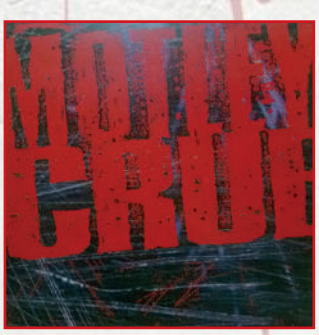
"But it wasn't just Krasnow," sighs Corabi. "Everybody he'd hired went as well. The Elektra building in New York was virtually empty for ages. And on top of this we'd also managed to upset MTV. They came down to our rehearsal room to do an interview and Nikki got so angry with their stupid questions that he threw them out and tried to hit the interviewer over the head with a mic stand. So we lost all MTV support on the spot. So now we had no label driving anything forward and one of our key media outlets had turned its back on us."

ON TOP of these commercial body blows, a planned US tour didn't exactly go to plan either. It kicked off on 9 June at the Tucson Community Center in Arizona – and just 4000 people turned up in a 10000 capacity arena.

"Look, it wasn't great," admits Corabi. "But it wasn't as bad as people would have you believe now. If you watch the movie *The Dirt*, it looks like we were reduced to playing in high school gyms in front of 10 fans. I wish they'd simply not bothered to cover this part of Mötley's career in the film, because it's not even close to being accurate. You have to understand that while grunge bands such as Nirvana and Pearl Jam were getting huge crowds, bands like us who'd built a reputation in the '80s were certainly suffering. But in Mötley we were still getting 4-5000 people turning up every night, and that was better than many.

"WE HAD NO RECORD COMPANY TO SPEAK OF, MTV WASN'T ON OUR SIDE, AND WE WERE GETTING NO RADIO AIRPLAY. PLUS THE ENTIRE GRUNGE MOVEMENT SAW BANDS LIKE MÖTLEY AND POISON AS THE ENEMY. WE HAD NO PROBLEMS WITH THEM AT ALL, WE EVEN LIKED THEIR MUSIC. BUT THEY WERE SLAGGING US OFF AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY."

"BOB ROCK TOLD US HE BELIEVED 'MÖTLEY CRÜE' WAS AS GOOD AS THE METALLICA 'BLACK ALBUM' HE'D PRODUCED. THE PRESIDENT OF OUR LABEL ELEKTRA TOLD US WE'D MADE 'A F*CKING MASTERPIECE'."



"We faced the perfect storm and it suddenly felt like everyone was against us. We had no record company to speak of, MTV wasn't on our side, and we were getting no radio airplay. Plus the entire grunge movement saw bands like Mötley and Poison as the enemy. We had no problems with them at all, we even liked their music. But they were slagging us off at every opportunity."

In the end, Mötley were forced to dip into their own pockets to keep their show on the road.

"Tommy, Nikki and Mick each paid out $75,000 to help out with costs. I was supposed to get a salary of $20,000 a week during the tour, but agreed to defer payment until things picked up. That meant I put in about

DARK DAYS

$120,000. We had to send home lighting rigs, equipment and even road crew to try to make it all work."

THE BAND finished the US tour on 29 August 1994 at the Hollywood Palladium in LA, though they did subsequently play seven shows in Japan. There was also a special benefit show at Club Shelter in Pasadena, California on 30 January the following year in aid of guitar tech Sammy Sanchez, who'd lost his daughter in a tragic accident. This would be Mötley Crüe's final gig with John Corabi, and by this point the band had already cleared out their manager, producer, lawyers and accountants.

"People do stupid things when fear takes over," says Corabi now. "There was an EP of outtakes from the 'Mötley Crüe' album sessions titled 'Quarternary' [released in September of '94], but then we did some work on a couple of new tracks with Bob Rock ['A Year I Lived In A Day' and 'La Dolce Vita']. Suddenly Tommy and Nikki decided they could do a better production job.

"I wasn't particularly happy about that, and I also wanted to keep Doug Thaler as manager," John continues. "After all, it wasn't his fault that WEA reacted as they did and he couldn't be blamed for Nikki's MTV outburst either. 'Mötley Crüe' was the first record Doug had worked on his own. Before that he'd been in partnership with Doc McGhee. I would've liked to see the pair get back together as a management team, but Nikki and Tommy wanted someone with a more aggressive approach. In the end the job went to Allen Kovac at a company called Left Bank – and one of the first things he said was that the band should bring Vince Neil back."

THAT DIDN'T happen straight away, and Mötley began working on another album with Corabi. Lee and Sixx co-produced material with Scott Humphrey and recording got underway at Sixx's home studio, the childishly named Butt Cheese West. But according to Corabi there seemed to be no coherent style.

"Let me explain how bonkers it all was," he says, still incredulous to this day. "We'd work on a song and I'd take a tape home to listen to. By the time I got back the next day Tommy and Nikki had totally overhauled it – and now they each wanted me to do something different with it. Nikki wanted vocals that sounded like David Bowie, the Sisters Of Mercy, and the Manic Street Preachers. I knew Bowie, but I'd never heard of the others! Tommy was into everyone from Pantera to Oasis and he wanted me to mimic Phil Anselmo. Scott, meanwhile, was after something like Cheap Trick. My head was spinning with all this indecision. I know Mick was as fed up as I was with what those three were doing."

The artistic push and pull that was going on was also tearing at the seams of the relationship between Sixx and Lee.

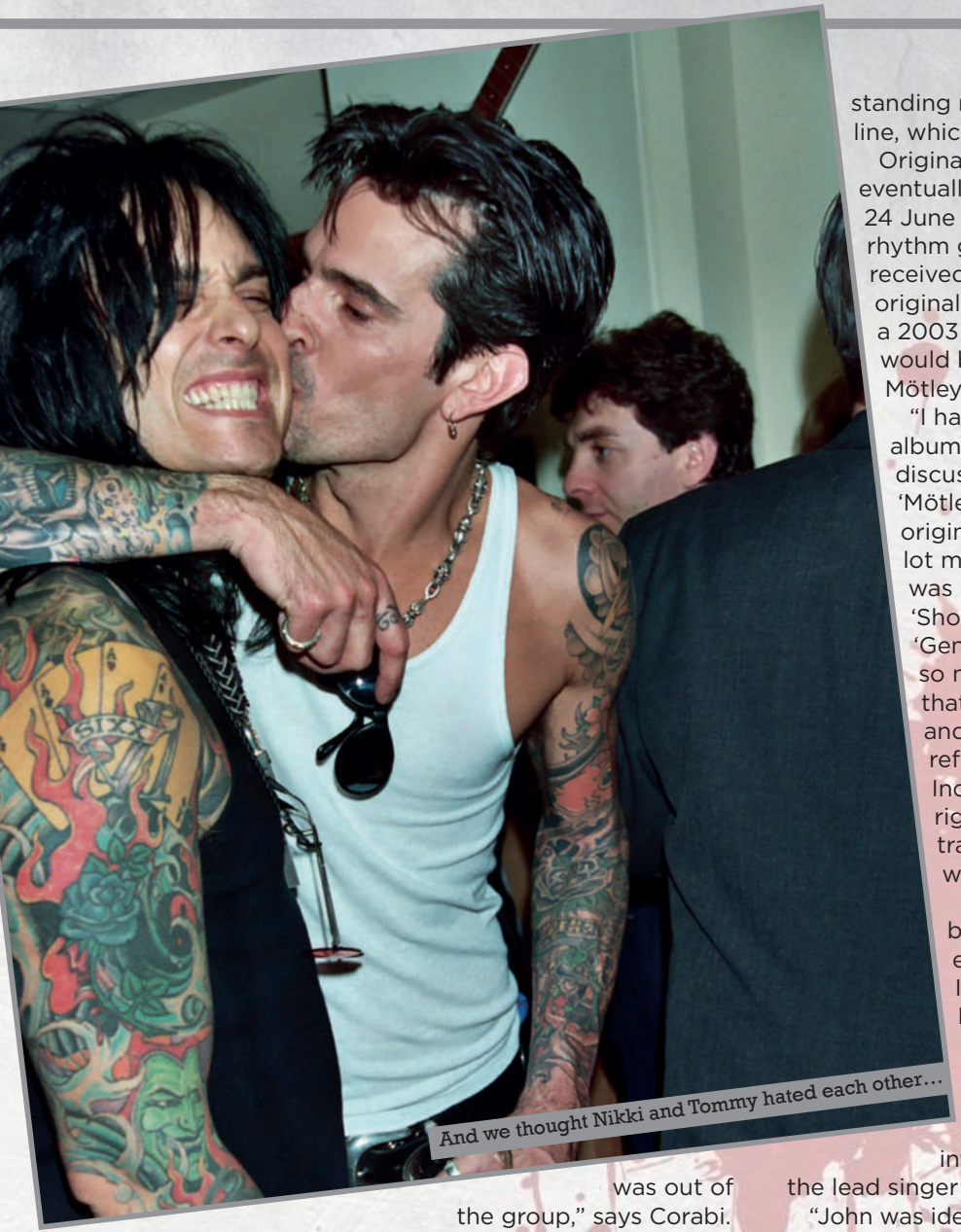
"I'd sit with Nikki and he'd tell me how much he hated Tommy. He called him 'Mr Hollywood' because of his relationships with Heather Locklear and Pamela Anderson. But then Tommy would badmouth Nikki to me. It was impossible. We missed Bob Rock too. He got everyone to perform at their best and when he made a criticism of any song we'd all listen to what he had to say. There was huge respect for Bob. I can't say the same about Scott."

ON 13 September 1996 Corabi was finally put out of his misery when Allen Kovac told him he was out of the band and Vince Neil was back in.

"I had a meeting with Kovac the day after he told me I

John Corabi fronting The Scream, the band he left to join the Crüe in 1992

Photos: IconicPix/Ray Palmer Archive; Getty Images/Jeff Kravitz/Film Magic Inc.



And we thought Nikki and Tommy hated each other…

was out of the group," says Corabi.

"He told me that I'd have seven or eight writing credits on the next Mötley album, which would make it a very lucrative affair for me, because Elektra were going to go all out to back the next release. I was also asked to go back into the studio to play some guitar, because the guys couldn't get anything out of Mick Mars. I asked whether Mick was OK with this and was told that he was fully on board. So I went in every day for three weeks, from 10 in the morning until about two in the afternoon, doing guitar parts for the album. Then one day I discovered that Mick had no idea this was going on. When he found out he was furious. It was only a few years ago that I finally managed to clear the air with him and explain how I was misled.

"Things got even weirder, though. Vince came down to the studio to do his vocals when I was there. It was the first time we'd met, but things between us were OK. But when Vince went in to sing Tommy told him he was making a mess of things. I'd been fired and my vocals had been erased, but even so Tommy then asked me to coach Vince. So you had this odd situation where I was standing next to Vince in the vocal booth singing a line, which Vince would then mimic."

Originally titled 'Personality #9', the album was eventually released as 'Generation Swine' on 24 June 1997. Corabi was credited with providing rhythm guitar and backing vocals, but only received writing credits for one song on the original release, 'Flush', and one bonus song on a 2003 remaster called 'Kiss The Sky'. Those would be Corabi's last recorded contributions to Mötley Crüe.

"I have to say I'm not fond of the way that album turned out," admits Corabi when discussing 'Generation Swine'. "I think the 'Mötley Crüe' album is far better. What we originally recorded for 'Personality #9' was a lot more powerful. It had a punky style that was reminiscent of the 'Too Fast For Love' and 'Shout At The Devil' albums. But by the time 'Generation Swine' came out there had been so many loops and electronic noises added that it changed the entire sound. Tommy and Nikki were keen to get something that reflected what Marilyn Manson and Nine Inch Nails were doing, and that just wasn't right for Mötley. The original versions of the tracks – the ones I'd done the vocals for – were far better.

"How do I feel now about my time in the band?" Corabi asks himself. "Well, I believe every experience is a good experience and I'm very proud of the 'Mötley Crüe' album. It seems to have aged pretty well, and people now accept it a lot more than they did at time."

FOR HIS part, Nikki Sixx now has an interesting take on John Corabi's time as the lead singer in Mötley Crüe.

"John was ideal for us," he told me. "He had black hair, so he fitted in well with the image of the rest of the band – unlike Vince. Plus he was a better singer and a better writer, as well as being so much easier to get along with. I really felt he was the right man for Mötley. But you know what? The fans wouldn't accept him. What it came down to was that people outside the band wouldn't accept John. They wanted Vince back.

"Our mistake was in putting the album out as Mötley Crüe. We should have come up with a new name for the band and that way I'm sure the reaction would have been much better. 'Mötley Crüe' is a strong album. It's just not a Mötley Crüe album."

With the benefit of hindsight I'm in agreement with both Corabi and Sixx that the 'Mötley Crüe' album deserves more credit than it originally got. None of the three studio albums the original line-up has since issued – 'Generation Swine', 2000's 'New Tattoo' and 2008's 'Saints Of Los Angeles' – have matched it for quality. Simple timing is often as crucial a factor as anything as to whether an album is a success. And with 'Mötley Crüe' there's no doubt that the timing was all wrong…

"I'D SIT WITH NIKKI AND HE'D TELL ME HOW MUCH HE HATED TOMMY. HE CALLED HIM 'MR HOLLYWOOD' BECAUSE OF HIS RELATIONSHIPS WITH HEATHER LOCKLEAR AND PAMELA ANDERSON. BUT THEN TOMMY WOULD BADMOUTH NIKKI TO ME. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE."

The Making of DEF LEPPARD'S

Producer **Tom Allom** (*left*) tells *Malcolm Dome* how he captured **Def Leppard**'s youthful enthusiasm on tape for the band's first album...

DEF LEPPARD'S RISE IN the UK from total unknowns to major label recording stars was spectacularly rapid. In November of 1978 the Sheffield band were simply rock fans with a dream, just about to record the independent 'Def Leppard E.P.' in the hope it would help then gain some mainstream attention. A year later, and with a substantial record deal with Phonogram already in the bag, Leppard were about to record their debut album in a swanky residential studio, having been touted for major success by the rock press as one of the leaders of the burgeoning New Wave Of British Heavy Metal movement.

Plenty of positive press and coveted UK tour supports with both Sammy Hagar and AC/DC had elevated Leppard to a position of influence that their achievements up to that point scarcely merited. But having dispensed with early managers Pete Martin and Frank Stuart Brown in favour of the powerhouse American duo of Peter Mensch and Cliff Burnstein from the respected Leber-Krebs organisation, the pressure to produce a knockout debut was well and truly on.

Tom Allom was hand-picked by Leppard's management to provide the level of sonic quality needed to drive the band into the commercial mainstream. The English producer had cut his recording teeth as an engineer on the first three Black Sabbath albums in the early '70s, but by that time had a varied CV that included production work with artists as diverse as the Strawbs, The Tourists and Pat Travers.

TOM, WERE YOU AWARE OF DEF LEPPARD AT ALL BEFORE YOU AGREED TO PRODUCE 'ON THROUGH THE NIGHT'?

"Not really. To be honest they hadn't come on to my radar at that time. When I was first asked if I'd be interested in working with the band they were a bit of an unknown quantity to me."

The Def Leppard line-up that recorded 'On Through The Night'. L-R: Joe Elliott (vocals), Rick Savage (bass), Pete Willis (guitar), Rick Allen (drums), Steve Clark (guitar)

'On Through The Night'

Photo: Getty Images/Chris Walter/WireImage

SO HOW DID YOU GET THE GIG?

"It was the band's manager, Cliff Burnstein, who contacted my manager at the time. I think Cliff knew about me and my work because I'd just produced the Pat Travers album 'Live! Go For What You Know'. That album had come out on Polydor, and that's where Cliff had worked before he got involved with managing bands. I imagine that had something to do with it."

WHAT WERE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE LEPPARD BOYS WHEN YOU MET THEM?

"I went up to meet them in Sheffield and took them out for a curry. Joe Elliott told me it was the first time anyone had taken them out for a meal! They were so young back then, and all five lived at home with their parents. They had no money whatsoever. I got on very well with all of them. They were all very nice and friendly young men – no egos at all. Joe was the oldest, and he was just 20, while the rest of them were still all in their teens."

DID YOU SEE THE BAND PERFORM BEFORE YOU WENT INTO THE STUDIO WITH THEM?

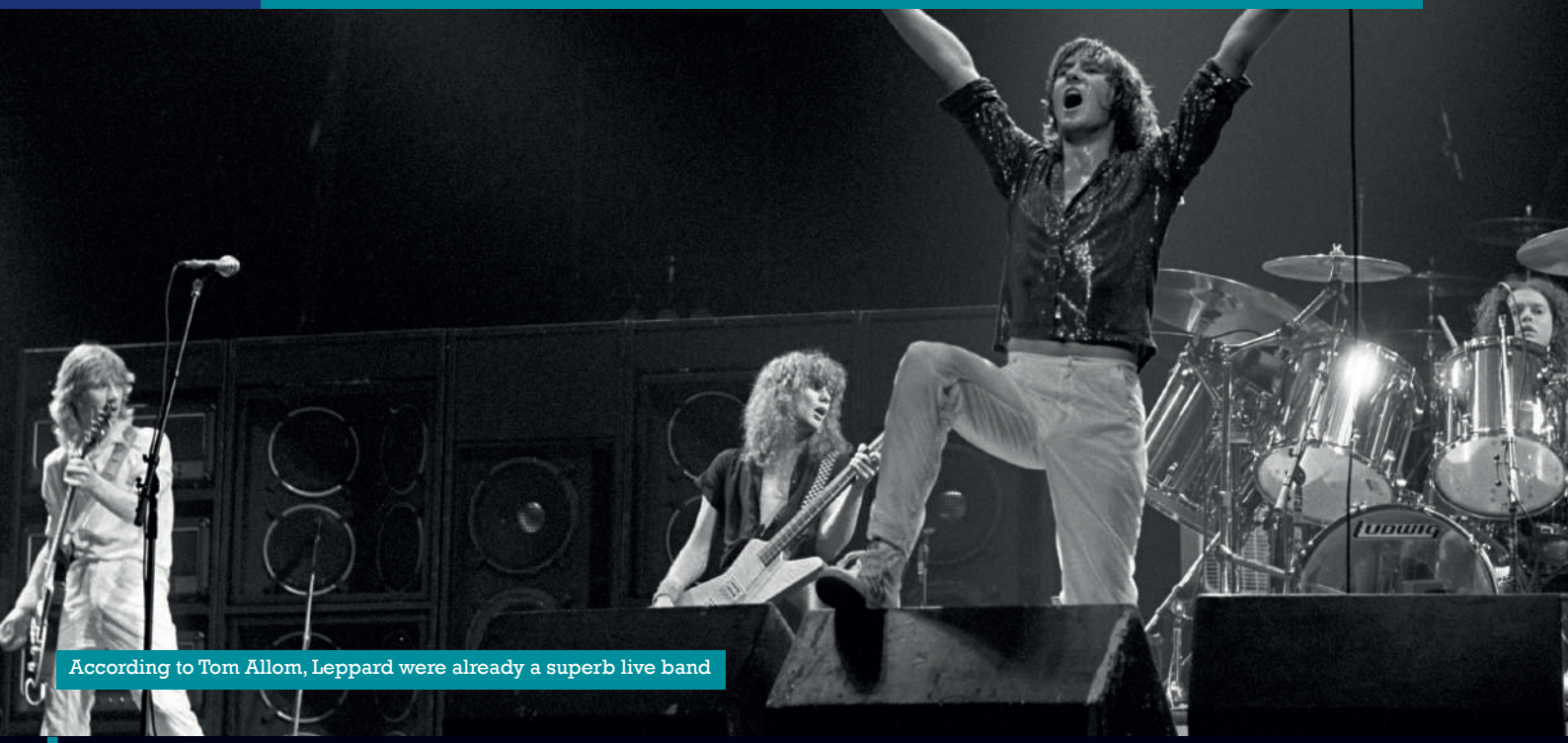
"Yes. Cliff Burnstein took me along to see them when they were opening for AC/DC in November of '79. I think it was in Birmingham, but I may be wrong. It could have been at the De Montfort Hall in Leicester. But I do remember being really impressed with them. Even though they were very inexperienced Leppard were already a superb live band. Even at that stage they had something that made them stand out from the crowd. I felt there was a lot I could work with and the fact that they were all so affable, so lacking in rock star egos, made it a very easy decision to agree to produce."

WERE THERE ANY DEMOS TO GIVE YOU A HEADS UP ON THE MATERIAL YOU'D BE WORKING ON?

"I don't remember anyone sending me any demos, but I did spend some time with the band at their rehearsal room in Sheffield. They used to practise directly

EYEWITNESS

DATELINE: DEC 1979 – JAN 1980



According to Tom Allom, Leppard were already a superb live band

above the workshop of a man who made cutlery. But it was Sheffield, which was famous for its steel, so what do you expect? Bizarrely, there was a big hole in the rehearsal room floor. You had to be really careful, otherwise you could easily have ended up falling through and getting badly hurt. It wasn't at all safe. You could look right down and watch this guy while he was working. I don't know how he could concentrate with Leppard making all that noise above him!"

> "I DON'T REMEMBER ANYONE SENDING ME ANY DEMOS, BUT I DID SPEND SOME TIME WITH THE BAND AT THEIR REHEARSAL ROOM IN SHEFFIELD. THEY USED TO PRACTISE DIRECTLY ABOVE THE WORKSHOP OF A MAN WHO MADE CUTLERY."

WHY WAS STARTLING STUDIOS IN ENGLAND CHOSEN AS THE RIGHT PLACE TO RECORD?

"Most likely because I'd already done a lot of work there. In that year of 1979 I'd already mixed the Judas Priest live album 'Unleashed In The East' there. I'd produced the third Hudson Ford album, 'Worlds Collide', at Startling back in 1975 and had also worked with [singer songwriter] Michael Chapman and [rock band] Blazer Blazer down there. So I knew the place very well. Plus it was also a residential studio, which definitely suited the Leppard boys. They didn't have to travel anywhere and they could settle in and take it easy."

DID YOU MAKE A LOT OF CHANGES TO THE ORIGINAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THE SONGS?

"No, because there wasn't any need. I left the boys to get on with it and work out the arrangements for themselves. I felt that what I should be concentrating on was capturing the sound they already had as accurately as possible."

DID YOU GET ANY SENSE THAT THERE WAS A BAND LEADER AT THIS EARLY STAGE?

"I think it's fair to say that Joe was very much the band's father figure. He was a little bit older than the others and they all looked up to him. I have to say that Joe was very mature for his age. He was a natural leader, but he was also someone you could talk to. There was no arrogance or bossiness about him."

WAS THERE A LOT OF PARTYING DURING THE TIME YOU WERE RECORDING?

"Very little. There was a local pub called the Royal Oak in a place called Sunningdale, which wasn't too far away. So every so often we'd go down there for a few drinks. But you have to bear in mind that Rick Allen was only 16 at the time. He wasn't even old enough to drink. Besides Joe, the rest of the guys were still in their teens as well, so there really weren't any wild and crazy times. We all got down to the challenge of making the best album we could. I guess Rick Allen was the wildest one. When we were recording he brought some scrambling bikes along. Our sound engineer Louis Austin and I went out on these bikes with Rick and put them through their paces. We did a bit of damage to the lawn! Ringo Starr owned the place, but I never heard if he had anything to say about the mess we made!"

SO AT THIS EARLY STAGE THERE WAS NO HINT OF THE DRINK AND DRUG PROBLEMS THAT WOULD EVENTUALLY BESET STEVE CLARK?

"None whatsoever. I remember Steve was a lovely guy, really friendly. I wish I hadn't lost contact with him after we did the album. When I found out about his death [on 8 January 1991 at the age of just 30] it really was very sad. I suppose he couldn't handle the fame and attention the band ended up getting. But there was no hint of that when I worked with Steve."

WERE ANY OF THE BAND MEMBERS DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH?

"There was nobody you'd call difficult. They all knew

their jobs and got on with things in a very unfussy way. They never wasted any time. It also helped enormously that the band was so well rehearsed. Each member knew what was expected of him and that not only made my job much easier, but it also made the whole recording process very pleasurable. It would have been easy for the boys to get carried away with all the attention they were getting at the time, but they weren't like that at all. All they wanted to do was make an album they'd be proud of."

Joe Elliott enjoying his work in a residential studio

HOW MUCH INVOLVEMENT DID PHONOGRAM HAVE IN THE RECORDING PROCESS?

"Thankfully not much at all. They allowed us to get on with it. Dave Bates had signed the band to Phonogram, so he came down two or three times to see how it was all progressing – and he was always very pleased with the way everything was sounding. I know he sent a lot of positive reports back to the Americans who were involved, and he pretty much left us to it. Nobody tried to influence what we were doing. Everybody seemed very excited."

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO RECORD THE ALBUM?

"We did two weeks in December 1979, just before Christmas. Then we took a break over the holiday period and reconvened in January of 1980 for another fortnight or so. The whole thing took about four weeks in total. We'd definitely finished everything before the end of January, because I started working with Priest on the 'British Steel' album in the same studio on 1 February."

WERE THERE ANY NUMBERS THAT WERE PARTICULARLY HARD TO NAIL?

"We really didn't have a problem with anything. Everything went very smoothly and each song seemed to come out very well without huge amounts of teeth pulling. I was particularly pleased with the way 'Hello America' and 'Rock Brigade' turned out, but I was generally pretty happy with the ways things went overall."

TWO SONGS, 'IT COULD BE YOU' AND 'IT DON'T MATTER', WERE BOTH WRITTEN IN THE STUDIO, WEREN'T THEY?

"That's right. We were a little short of material, so the band pulled these two tracks together while we were there. I'd actually forgotten about that. I thought we only needed one extra song, but now I think about it you're right. There were two that were done off the bat at the last minute."

IS IT TRUE THAT YOU USED A KITCHEN KETTLE TO GET A COWBELL SOUND ON 'IT DON'T MATTER'?

"That's absolutely correct. These days it's so easy to get any sound you want by using technology, but back then you had to improvise. I can't remember why we didn't use an actual cowbell, but we found this stainless steel kettle in the house and decided to try using that instead. Sonically it worked a treat, but the kettle wasn't very strong and we pretty much destroyed it! When Rose, the studio cook, came in the next day and saw what we'd done to her kettle she wasn't best pleased. Rose really looked after us while we were there and made sure we were always well fed, so ruining her kettle wasn't a very nice way to repay her for her kindness – especially as we didn't even ask her permission to use it!"

DID YOU HAVE ANY OTHER TRICKS LIKE THAT UP YOUR SLEEVE TO GET SOUNDS FOR THE ALBUM?

"I did, actually. If you listen to the end of 'When The Walls Came Tumbling Down' you'll hear what sounds like a huge explosion. To get that sound we came up with a cunning plan. Well, to be fair it was actually Louis Austin who had the idea. We simply recorded a match being struck. Startling was a 24-track studio, so we filled up all the available space we had on the tape with the sound of a match being struck, then slowed everything down to a quarter speed. It worked out superbly and I think what you hear on the track is a very convincing imitation of an explosion. I'm sure most people thought we'd actually set off a real explosion in the grounds of the studio or something like that. But 40 years ago you had to think outside of the box to get effects like that."

HOW DID EVERYBODY FEEL ABOUT THE ALBUM WHEN IT WAS DONE?

"Everyone seemed very pleased with what we'd got down on tape and the feeling was that 'On Through The Night' could be a big seller. I never heard anything negative from anyone involved with the band about the job I'd done."

DID YOU HAVE ANY EXPECTATIONS, SALES-WISE?

"I was very confident that the album would sell well. I knew how good the band was live and that they'd already built up a decent fan base in the UK. With the backing of a major label I knew things would

Photos: Getty Images/Tom Hill; IconicPix/PG Brunelli

EYEWITNESS

DATELINE: DEC 1979 – JAN 1980

"IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EASY FOR THE BOYS TO GET CARRIED AWAY WITH ALL THE ATTENTION THEY WERE GETTING AT THE TIME, BUT THEY WEREN'T LIKE THAT AT ALL. ALL THEY WANTED TO DO WAS MAKE AN ALBUM THEY'D BE PROUD OF."

move fast. It was also a great time to be in a rock band. Metal music was surging in popularity and it seemed fairly obvious that Leppard were well placed to take advantage of that.

"Right around that time I was in the process of moving out to the States. Just after 'On Through The Night' had been released I remember seeing a huge window display for the album in a record shop in Miami. It was massive, so I knew the label were determined to make sure the band got noticed in the States. Leppard toured a lot in the US on the back of the album. I went to see them opening for Ted Nugent and they went down really well. Leppard really seemed to click with US fans right from the start, so that underlined my belief that they were going to have a big seller on their hands."

HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT THE LUKEWARM PRESS REACTION THE ALBUM GOT AT THE TIME?

"I don't usually read reviews of albums I've worked on – and I certainly don't let them upset me if they're negative. I was aware that there were some bad comments about the album in the media, but I look at it this way. The reviewer hasn't paid for their copy of the album, so their view of it will be totally different to that of the people who walk into record shops – as they did in those days – and hand over money for a copy. There were so many people buying 'On Through The Night' that I didn't worry about what was being written in the music press."

DID YOU KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE BAND AFTER YOU'D FINISHED WORKING TOGETHER?

"Sadly not and I wish I had. In fact, the last time I saw the guys was at that Ted Nugent show I mentioned all those years ago. Since then I've not heard from any of them and our paths just haven't crossed. I've been busy doing my own stuff and Leppard have obviously had a stellar career of their own. The demands on their time must be enormous, but I'd love to be back in touch. I was very fond of them back then, both as musicians and as people. I still cherish the memory of working on the album."

WERE YOU SURPRISED THAT YOU WEREN'T ASKED TO PRODUCE THE SECOND LEPPARD ALBUM, 'HIGH 'N' DRY', IN 1981?

"I was a little disappointed, yes, but you can't argue with the change they made when they decided to work with Mutt Lange. Leppard were big fans of AC/DC and Mutt had done a brilliant job with that band. He did the same with Leppard. He took those boys, altered their sound, and really made them a Mutt Lange rock band – and I don't mean that in any negative sense at all."

WITH THE BENEFIT OF HINDSIGHT, DO YOU THINK 'ON THROUGH THE NIGHT' WAS AS GOOD AS IT COULD HAVE BEEN?

"I've not heard the album for a long time, but I do wish I'd done the album *after* producing 'British Steel' with Priest. Doing that album really gave me a taste for working with heavy bands again. At the time I hadn't worked with a proper heavy band since engineering the first three Sabbath albums at the start of the '70s. Maybe I should have spent a bit more time hardening the Leppard sound. Had I done 'On Through The Night' after Priest, then I am sure it would have been a heavier record.

"If I have one other regret about 'On Through The Night' it's that I didn't think to use other areas of the residential studio to record in outside of the studio area itself. I think Rick's drum sound is pretty dead on the record. On 'British Steel' I recorded the drums in an area of the house that gave them much more substance. But having said that, I believe what you hear on 'On Through The Night' still does a decent job of representing what Def Leppard were all about at the time."

DEF LEPPARD – 'ON THROUGH THE NIGHT'

Recorded: December 1979–January 1980
Released: 14 March 1980

LINE UP:
JOE ELLIOTT – lead vocals, backing vocals
STEVE CLARK – lead and rhythm guitars, backing vocals
PETE WILLIS – lead and rhythm guitars, backing vocals
RICK SAVAGE – bass guitar, backing vocals
RICK ALLEN – drums, backing vocals

Produced by Tom Allom
Engineered by Louis 'Snook' Austin and Dick Plant
Recorded: Startling Studios, Ascot, England

TRACK LISTING

Rock Brigade (Rick Savage, Steve Clark, Joe Elliott)
Hello America (Rick Savage, Steve Clark, Joe Elliott)
Sorrow Is A Woman (Rick Savage, Steve Clark, Pete Willis, Joe Elliott)
It Could Be You (Pete Willis, Joe Elliott)
Satellite (Rick Savage, Steve Clark, Pete Willis, Joe Elliott)
When The Walls Came Tumbling Down (Steve Clark, Joe Elliott, Andrew Smith)
Wasted (Steve Clark, Joe Elliott)
Rocks Off (Pete Willis, Rick Savage, Steve Clark, Joe Elliott)
It Don't Matter (Pete Willis, Joe Elliott, Steve Clark)
Answer To The Master (Pete Willis, Steve Clark, Rick Savage, Joe Elliott)
Overture (Rick Savage, Steve Clark, Pete Willis, Joe Elliott)

Photos: IconicPix/PG Brunelli; Getty Images/Tom Hill

OVERLOOKED

The Dictators in 1976. L–R: Andy Shernoff (bass), Ritchie Teeter (drums), 'Handsome Dick' Manitoba (vocals), Ross 'The Boss' Friedman (guitar), Scott Kempner (guitar)

The Dictators never sold many records, but their quirky, offbeat rock'n'roll was recognised by maverick Blue Öyster Cult Svengali Sandy Pearlman, loved by Bruce Springsteen, and is now credited with sowing the seeds of American punk rock. *Ross Sampson* talks to founder and bassist **Andy Shernoff**, guitarist **Ross Friedman**, and frontman **'Handsome Dick' Manitoba** about this singular act...

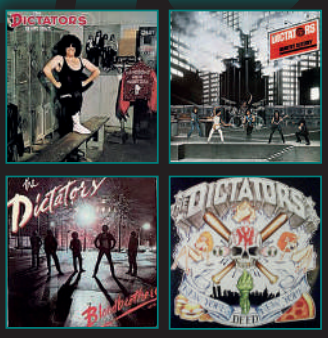
THE DICTATORS, WILD BOYS from New York, arrived on the music scene in 1975 with their debut album, 'Go Girl Crazy!', and to all intents and purposes invented American punk rock. They had the look, the attitude, the leather jackets, and the NYC background. They also had the songs. But the one thing they didn't have – except, bizarrely, in Spain – was a significant fan base. The Dictators had a super-supporter in the form of Bruce Springsteen, and a small-but-loyal live following. Somehow, though, over the course of three studio albums released between '75 and '78, this never translated into real commercial success.

Nevertheless, the band's incredible first album laid out The Dictators' stall and showed exactly who they were and how they meant to go on. Attitude was stamped right through it, from the album's mock film title to the fun cover featuring Afro-haired "additional lead vocalist" 'Handsome Dick' Manitoba (born Richard Blum) dressed as a wrestler hamming it up in a locker room in front of a poster of the band. The other original band members didn't miss out on nicknames either. The Dictators line-up was completed by Andy 'Adny' Shernoff on lead vocals and bass, Ross 'The Boss' FUNichello (real name Ross Friedman) on lead guitar, 'Stu Boy' King on drums, and Scott 'Top Ten' Kempner on rhythm guitar.

Their music was cool, their lyrics were clever and funny, and Ross's lead guitar solos positively sizzled on every song. Those musical skills were later put to good use in both Shakin' Street and, more significantly, Manowar.

Critics and rock magazines were quickly on board with The Dictators. Music manager, publicist, journalist and author Danny Fields – one of *the* most influential figures in the history of punk rock – wrote in *Penthouse* magazine in 1975 that they were "the ultimate in wise ass raunch moderne." Writing in *Creem* magazine that same year, Lauren Agnelli said that the band's debut album was "ear boggling" with "swell melodies and lyrics" and had songs "backed by lissom shrieking leads" with "every track an uncouth jewel!" The Dictators pre-dated the Ramones by a year and were directly responsible for the formation of

DICTATORS RULE!



the massively important music fanzine *Punk*. Its co-founders – cartoonist John Holmstrom, publisher Ged Dunn, and music journo 'Legs' McNeil – said they created the magazine "so we could hang out with The Dictators!"

UNLEASHED ON the world by the legendary production/management team of Sandy Pearlman and Murray Krugman – the duo behind Blue Öyster Cult – The Dictators are deserving of high praise. If you already know them, now's the time to rediscover and re-evaluate. And if you don't, you're in for a treat. Over the course of the band's four studio albums of original material and two live albums from '81 and '98 there's a whole lot of stuff to enjoy and appreciate...

TELL US ABOUT THE ROOTS OF THE DICTATORS...

ANDY SHERNOFF: "I was attending State University at New Paltz in New York State and my roommate was friends with Scott Kempner. In those days if you met another person who liked The Stooges you immediately became friends, so we bonded over rock'n'roll! Ross was playing in a local band called Total Crudd who had crazy, over-the-top parties that I regularly attended. One day Ross told me he wanted to quit Total Crudd and start a new band, so I said, 'Great, I'll play bass', even though I didn't *own* a bass. Still, soon we were off to the races. Our very first show was opening for The Stooges and Blue Öyster Cult in the gym at Prince George's Community College in Maryland in November of 1973. Within a year we had a record deal with Epic."

'HANDSOME DICK' MANITOBA: "Scott and I knew each other in fourth grade! I started out as a roadie for the band and because I couldn't play an instrument they thought they'd try me on vocals! I was and am the guy who can put a song over. I may not have the best voice or be note perfect, but I can *sell* a song!"

HOW DID THE BAND MEET SANDY PEARLMAN AND MURRAY KRUGMAN?

ANDY: "We were friends with [rock writer and Blue Öyster Cult collaborator/lyricist] Richard Meltzer, who was friends with Sandy, who was in partnership with Murray. Those guys immediately understood what we were doing. We felt they were on our team because we spoke the same language and had the same sense of humour. I find it amazing that they not only let us follow our peculiar, non-commercial muse, but they actually encouraged it! It was Murray's idea to package the first album to mimic a wrestling magazine. I'll always be grateful for their support."

ROSS 'THE BOSS' FRIEDMAN: "We told Richard Meltzer we had a band and so he came to see what we were like. We were literally in the middle of nowhere, specifically so we couldn't bother anyone with our music. Richard heard the band and really liked us, so he introduced us to Sandy and Murray."

DICK: "I liked Sandy from the moment I met him. He was super smart, a very eccentric individual and a very important part of who we were."

> "LITTLE STEVEN WAS RIGHT WHEN HE SAID THAT THE DICTATORS WERE THE CONNECTIVE TISSUE BETWEEN THE ERAS OF THE MC5, THE STOOGES AND THE NEW YORK DOLLS, AND THE PUNK EXPLOSION OF THE MID- TO LATE-'70S."
> **ANDY SHERNOFF**

A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK THE FIRST DICTATORS ALBUM HERALDED THE BEGINNING OF AMERICAN PUNK. DO YOU AGREE?

ROSS: "It *was* the first American punk record. It pre-dated the Ramones by a full year and there were a lot of similarities between us and them – my leather jacket, my hair, the way we looked, the way we both did a cover of 'California Sun'. The Dictators was punk with a lead guitar player and I think that's what set us apart."

ANDY: "Music is evolutionary and everything's influenced by what came before. The Stooges and the MC5 influenced us, the Ramones were influenced *by* us. We were playing the music we wanted to hear, but I also knew we were doing something out of the ordinary for the times. I believe the musical revolution we call punk rock would have happened with or without us. There was a musical vacuum that inevitably was going to be filled. Little Steven was right when he said that The Dictators were the connective tissue between the eras of the MC5, The Stooges and the New York Dolls, and the punk explosion of the mid- to late-'70s. But I never could have predicted I'd be talking about it 45 years later." ►

Photo: Getty Images/Ebet Roberts/Redferns

OVERLOOKED

'Handsome Dick' Manitoba and Mark 'The Animal' Mendoza. Let's go Afro crazy!

WHAT WAS THE CREATIVE PROCESS BEHIND THE DISTINCTIVE DICTATORS STYLE?

ANDY: "There was something about it that was exhilarating, but there was no particular method, other than to be agile and open to where the winds of inspiration took you. I'd get a title or a killer riff first, then develop a vision of where the song should go. Then it was all about creating dynamics, tension and release, both lyrically and musically. I preferred to take my time and let a song evolve on its own schedule. I once heard a story where somebody complimented Leonard Cohen on a song and he said, 'That one took me a year.' I haven't rushed writing a song since."

THERE WAS A LOT OF HUMOUR ON 'GO GIRL CRAZY!' DO YOU THINK THE ATTITUDE YOU HAD HELD YOU BACK COMMERCIALLY?

ROSS: "I think a lot of things held us back. People really did *not* get our humour at the time. *Now* they're getting it, but back then it was, 'Who the f*ck are these assholes?' I think being so original and being on a corporate label like CBS/Epic didn't match up. We would've been better off on Seymour Stein's Sire label with the Ramones."

ANDY: "I do think the humour stopped us from having greater success, but I also think it endeared us to the oddballs who became our fans and identified with our irreverent attitude. There really was no 'right' label for us. This was before the CBGB club in New York became a punk hotspot, before the Ramones released their debut. The New York Dolls were an epic failure and the punk rock scene was still over a year away. There wasn't an established pathway to market a band like us. We were absolutely unfit for radio and there was no place for us to play. Epic Records didn't know what to do with us, so we were quickly dropped after the first album."

IS THAT INABILITY TO FIT IN THE REASON YOU PLAYED WITH SUCH AN ODD ASSORTMENT OF BANDS IN THOSE EARLY DAYS?

ROSS: "We weren't a great band back then and got sent out on big tours with bands we really didn't fit in with. So when we should have been blasting away in the clubs and getting better, we weren't... We did our first tour with Rush and I remember thinking, 'What the f*ck are we doing?' When Manitoba came out on stage it was like, 'Who the f*ck is this guy?' But Sandy Pearlman's thinking was 'The bigger the better'. So we just went out there and played. People noticed that I could really play, so I got some accolades. But they just didn't get *us*."

ANDY: "When we started out there was no circuit of punk rock clubs where you could hone your chops and do your 10,000 hours to get good. Our managers wanted us to play, so in '74 and '75 we were thrown to the wolves. Shows opening for Rush, Billy Preston, and a calypso singer called Exuma were all we could get. And of course they were disastrous! We couldn't understand why these audiences didn't get our humour. Ah, the naivety of youth!"

ANDY, YOU LEFT THE BAND AFTER THE COMMERCIAL FAILURE OF THE FIRST ALBUM, REPLACED BY MARK 'THE ANIMAL' MENDOZA. BUT YOU WERE BACK AS A KEYBOARDIST FOR THE SECOND ALBUM, 1977'S 'MANIFEST DESTINY'. WHAT MADE YOU RE-JOIN?

ANDY: "I was young and immature, so leaving the band after Epic dropped us was unfortunate. I incorrectly saw the band and myself as failures. But things moved quickly in those days and CBGB started really happening. Suddenly there was a burgeoning punk rock scene and an audience for The Dictators, which precipitated my return."

'MANIFEST DESTINY' WAS A MUCH MORE COMMERCIAL RECORD THAN 'GO GIRL CRAZY!'...

ANDY: "And it was also our biggest career miscalculation. We knew we'd given Epic a record that was difficult to market, so the plan was to give the next record company, Asylum, an album that was *very* marketable. Hence 'Manifest Destiny', which was a valiant attempt that did get some radio play and sold way more than 'Go Girl Crazy!' But history tells us that 1977 was actually the year to make the quirky record, *not* the mainstream rock record. We were delusional enough to think that The Dictators were capable of making a successful mainstream rock record."

ROSS: "I don't think we should have changed. 'Manifest Destiny' was Andy's experimental pop record and he wanted the arrangements to be more intricate and ever-changing. But listening back to the album now I think there was a lot of good stuff going on there."

DICK: "We shouldn't have changed. The Ramones didn't change, AC/DC didn't change – and it worked out pretty good for them. We should have stuck to what we were."

BUT THIRD ALBUM 'BLOODBROTHERS' WAS A RETURN TO THE ESTABLISHED EARLIER STYLE...

ROSS: "Absolutely! We decided to go back to our roots and just be a rock band."

ANDY: "That's what it was intended to be. Before we

made the third album we toured the UK with The Stranglers and it was there that I directly saw the power of punk rock. In America it was a sideshow, not taken seriously by the record companies or by the culture at large. But in Britain it was more than music. It was a cultural force that was making inroads in fashion, art, and politics. I remember coming back from England, cutting my long hair and writing all the songs for 'Bloodbrothers' in a few weeks. I was that inspired!

"I KNEW THE BAND WAS GOOD, BUT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN NICE TO HAVE A LITTLE SUCCESS AT THE TIME."
ROSS 'THE BOSS' FRIEDMAN

NOT EVERYONE KNOWS THAT BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN APPEARS ON THE 'FASTER & LOUDER' SONG FROM 'BLOODBROTHERS'...

ANDY: "When we were recording the album at the Record Plant in New York City, Bruce was recording 'Darkness On The Edge Of Town' in the studio next to ours. There was a common lounge, so whoever was taking a break would socialise. Either Scott or I had the idea to ask Bruce to do a count at the end of the solo of 'Faster & Louder', sort of like he does in the breakdown on 'Born To Run'. We never put Bruce's name on the record or publicised it. We did for ourselves, fan geek stuff. But it was a thrill to get his voice on the record."
ROSS: "There were two Bosses on the same album!"
DICK: "I had a signed photo Bruce gave me the day he recorded that song. I had it hanging on the wall in my Manitoba's bar in NY for years – until somebody stole it!"

THAT SHADOWY, RAINSWEPT SHOT OF THE BAND ON THE 'BLOODBROTHERS' COVER IS SO EVOCATIVE...

ANDY: "We named 'Bloodbrothers' after the Richard Price novel of the same name. As a tribute we decided to shoot the cover in the playground of the housing project where Price set many scenes in his books. We'd actually finished shooting when I strolled over to the Hasselblad camera that was still on its tripod. I took a look through the viewfinder and saw everybody standing in the shadows of the streetlight. I thought it looked cool, so I called the photographer over and suggested we do a few more photos to capture that shadowy vibe."

'BLOODBROTHERS' WASN'T ENOUGH OF A SUCCESS TO KEEP THE DICTATORS GOING, THOUGH, AND THE BAND SPLIT AT THE END OF THE '70S. BUT IN 2001 YOU WERE BACK WITH A NEW STUDIO ALBUM, 'D.F.F.D.'. WHY DID THE REFORMATION HAPPEN?

ANDY: "In the late '90s the book *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History Of Punk* was released detailing the rise of the New York punk scene in the '70s and there was some revived interest in the band. We started touring Europe and America and a new record was necessary to avoid becoming something I absolutely despise, an oldies band living off past glories! Great rock'n'roll bands are always putting out new music. I also felt that we needed another record to complete the band's legacy. 'D.F.F.D.' ended up turning a lot of people on to us and yielded one of our most popular songs, 'Who Will Save Rock And Roll?', which is pretty rare for a 'comeback record'."

IT REALLY HELPED THAT 'D.F.F.D.' IS THE BEST SOUNDING DICTATORS ALBUM OF THEM ALL...

ANDY: "I wasn't happy with the first three records sonically and that frustration led me to try to figure out how to translate the sounds in my head into a physical record. By the time we recorded 'D.F.F.D.' I'd made dozens of records as a producer so I had my skills down, the band had improved as musicians and we were able to make the record we wanted."
ROSS: "I never liked the mixes on the earlier albums. We weren't in charge of things so much back then, so Sandy and a bunch of other guys were doing the mixes."

YOU WERE NEVER A MAJOR ACT IN THE STATES, BUT FOR SOME REASON THE SPANISH REALLY TOOK TO THE DICTATORS. ANY IDEA WHY?

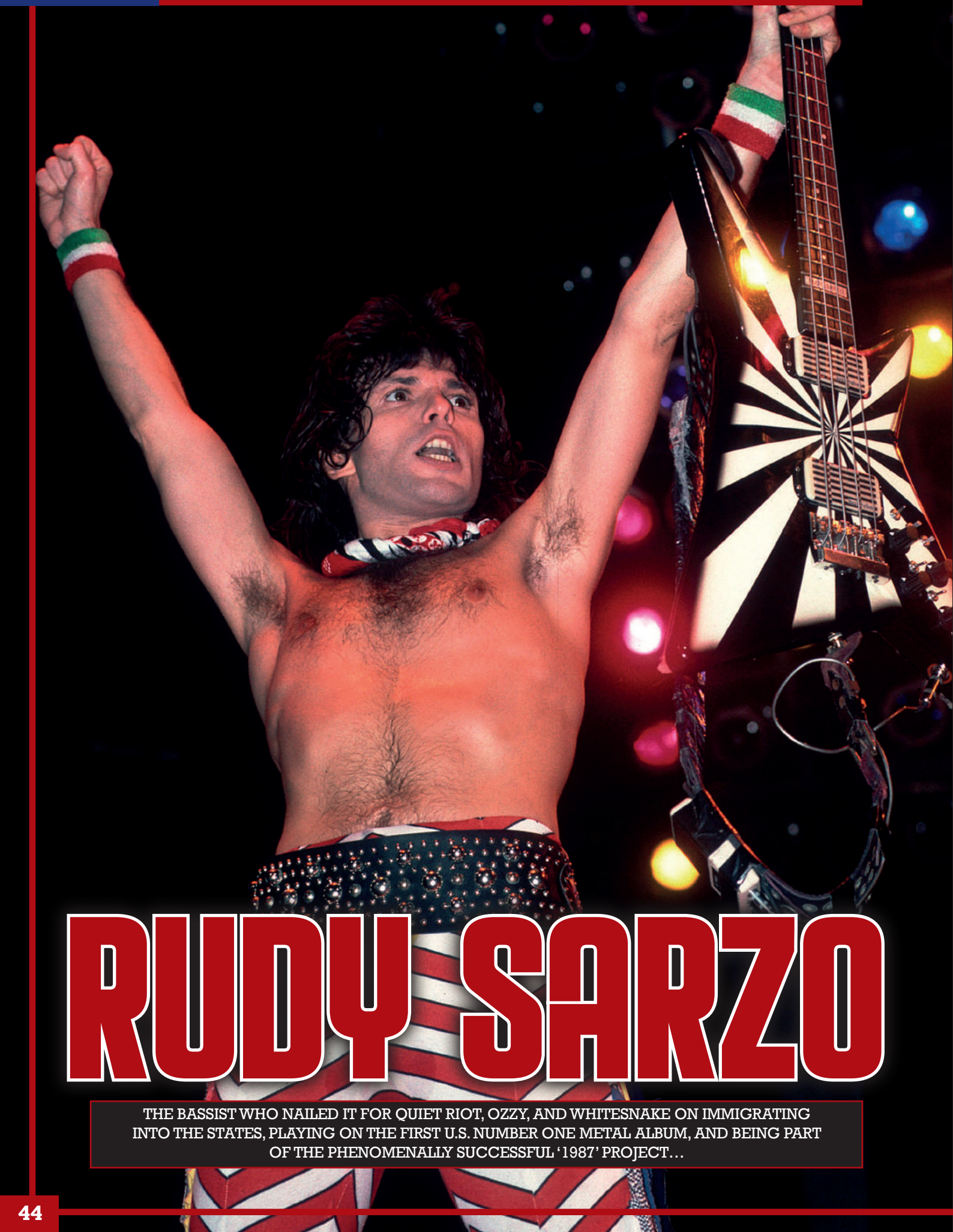
ANDY: "The Spanish love rock'n'roll and support many niche bands, and we're lucky enough to be one group they continue to support. I'm vacationing in Spain with my wife this spring and I've been invited to be on national radio for an hour to discuss my career. That wouldn't happen in any other country in the world!"
DICK: "They're smart people! Sometimes it just is what it is and when something succeeds or is appreciated somewhere and not elsewhere it's best not to question it!"

WHAT IS THE LEGACY OF THE DICTATORS?

ROSS: "People are appreciating us more and more. It's a tremendous honour, really. In 2015 *Uncut* magazine in the UK decided 'Go Girl Crazy!' was the best American punk album ever – ahead of the Ramones! Getting respect after all this time and after we put so much into it is a great thing. There were times that were so disappointing, where we didn't know what we were doing or where we were going. I knew the band was good, but it would have been nice to have a little success at the time. The live crowds loved us, but the buying public didn't!"
DICK: "No one was doing it like we did it, and now people look back and *get it* more than they did at the time!"
ANDY: "To be honest I don't think much about The Dictators or The Dictators' legacy. I'll leave that to others. If we're revered, then I'm certainly appreciative, but for me making music is its own reward. I consider every day I make music to be a good day and from that perspective life has been very good to me."

Photos: Getty Images/Michael Putland; Getty Images/Richard McCaffrey/Michael Ochs Archive; IconicPix/George Bodnar Archive

THE *ROCK CANDY* Q&A



RUDY SARZO

THE BASSIST WHO NAILED IT FOR QUIET RIOT, OZZY, AND WHITESNAKE ON IMMIGRATING INTO THE STATES, PLAYING ON THE FIRST U.S. NUMBER ONE METAL ALBUM, AND BEING PART OF THE PHENOMENALLY SUCCESSFUL '1987' PROJECT…

RUDY, YOU WERE BORN IN CUBA, BUT IMMIGRATED TO THE U.S. WITH YOUR PARENTS WHEN YOU WERE JUST 10. WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER OF THAT TIME?
"I was two months shy of my 11th birthday when we arrived in the US in 1961. I knew that Cuba had turned communist, but was too young to understand what that really meant. I was both nervous and excited about my new life in America, but I knew that my parents had sacrificed everything for my brother and me to have a shot at a great life there."

WHAT DID MUSIC MEAN TO YOU IN THOSE FORMATIVE YEARS?
"Freedom, I guess. Rock music is all about freedom of expression and so my interest in playing must have come out of the sense of freedom I experienced once I'd made it to the States!"

YOUR FIRST SERIOUS BAND WAS QUIET RIOT AT THE END OF THE '70S, BUT YOU REALLY CAME TO MAINSTREAM ATTENTION WHEN YOU JOINED OZZY OSBOURNE'S BAND IN 1981. HOW DID THAT HAPPEN?
"I was in Quiet Riot with my friend Kevin DuBrow, but when [guitarist] Randy Rhoads left to join Ozzy the group kind of stalled. When Ozzy needed a bass player my connection with Randy helped me to get the gig. Randy's legacy is very special to me and to see the esteem in which he's still held is very satisfying."

YOU WENT BACK TO QUIET RIOT TOWARD THE END OF 1982 AND ENDED UP PLAYING ON 'METAL HEALTH', THE FIRST HEAVY METAL ALBUM TO HIT THE NUMBER ONE SPOT ON THE U.S. *BILLBOARD* CHART. WAS THAT A MILESTONE MOMENT FOR YOU?
"Of course, but it didn't feel that way when we recorded it. I thought we'd made a great little album, but there was no way I believed it'd be as successful as it was. Things were great in that band at first, but after a couple of years a lot of conflict started to surface. We toured with Whitesnake in 1984 and I found myself hanging out with them more than my own group. That was a sign to me."

SO WERE YOU LOOKING TO JUMP SHIP AT THAT POINT?
"Yes. I gave notice that I was going to leave Quiet Riot at the end of that tour, but the last thing I was interested in was joining Whitesnake, because I'd noticed that there were conflicts within that band too."

AT THAT TIME YOU TRIED TO PUT A BAND TOGETHER WITH YOUR FORMER OZZY BANDMATE, DRUMMER TOMMY ALDRIDGE. WHAT HAPPENED THERE?
"On the last day of the Quiet Riot tour with Whitesnake, David Coverdale gave me a goodbye hug and whispered in my ear, 'Soon we're going to play together.' But never once during that tour had I talked to David about leaving Quiet Riot, so I thought that was odd. Tommy and I put a project together called M.A.R.S. and early on we got a call from Whitesnake's management. There was talk of maybe working on a new Whitesnake record with David. But because I'd seen evidence of conflict between David and [guitarist] John Sykes on tour I declined the offer. I'd just left a situation where there was a lot of tension and didn't want that again. Tommy made the same choice."

SO WHY DID YOU END UP CHANGING YOUR MIND AND WORKING WITH WHITESNAKE EVENTUALLY?
"At the beginning of 1987 Tommy and I got a call from [Geffen Records A&R man] John Kalodner asking us to come in to film the video for a Whitesnake song, 'Still Of The Night'. John was no longer involved in the band and the idea of working with David was very appealing. I was a huge fan of his work in Deep Purple, especially on the 'Burn' record. I knew how awesome he was."

AND DID PERFORMING IN THAT LEGENDARY VIDEO LEAD TO A FIRM OFFER TO JOIN WHITESNAKE?
"Apparently David had made a wish list of the players he really wanted to be in Whitesnake ongoing, and that was exactly the band that appeared in the 'Still Of The Night' video. I had a meeting with management and was made an offer. In fact, I believe everyone who appeared in the video got the same participation offer. But it wasn't your usual 'hired gun' situation. There were more incentives involved."

"THE '1987' ALBUM TOOK WHITESNAKE TO ANOTHER LEVEL. WE ALL CAME FROM WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL CAREER UNCERTAINTY, AND ONCE WE GOT INTO WHITESNAKE EVERYTHING SUDDENLY STARTED TO ROLL. IT SEEMED UNSTOPPABLE."

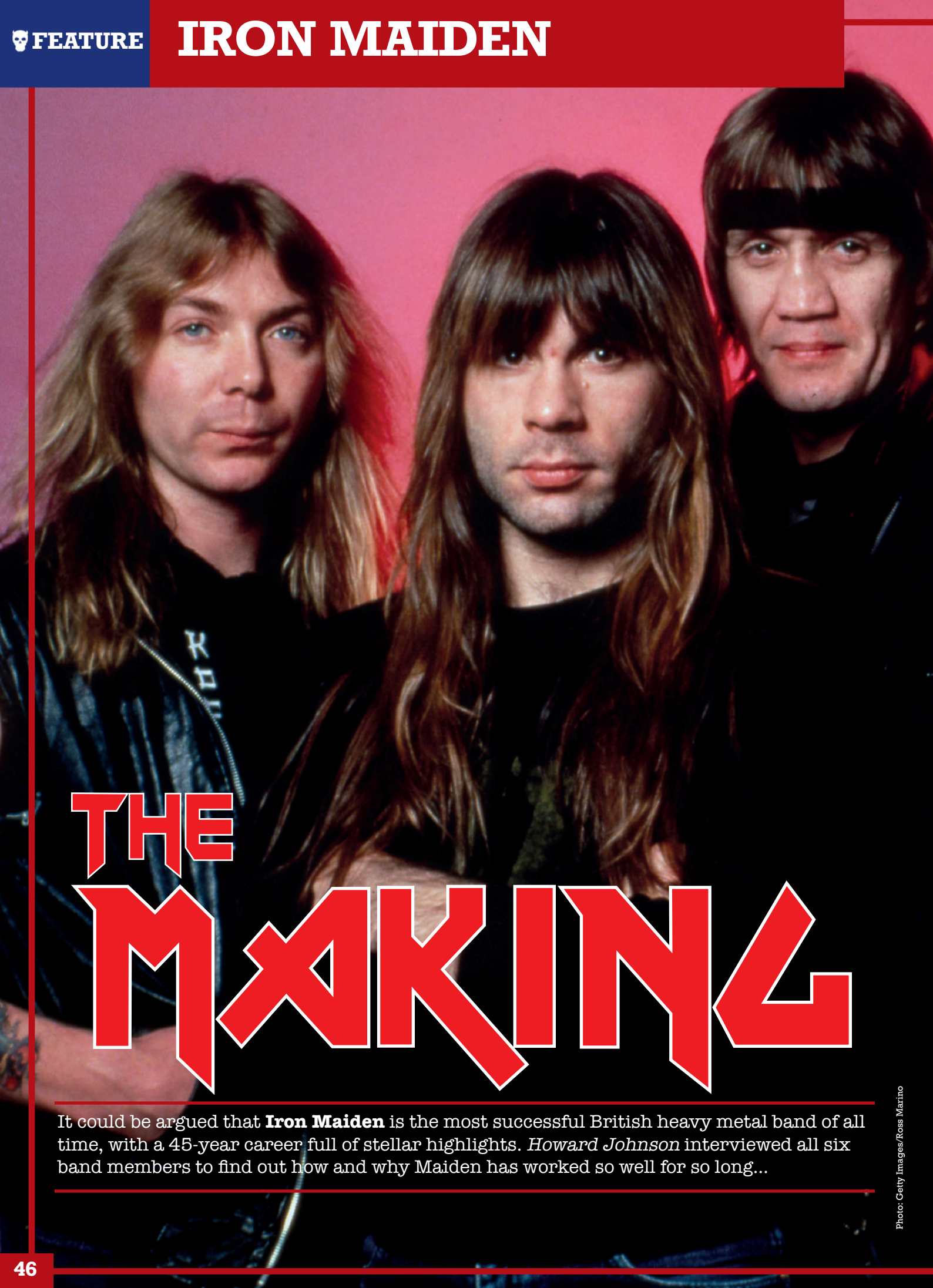
YOU WERE EMPLOYED TO TOUR THE HUGELY SUCCESSFUL '1987' ALBUM. WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE RECORD?
"I thought it was phenomenal, but then I always expected something great from Whitesnake. But it is true that the '1987' album took Whitesnake to another level and I think that had a lot to do with John Kalodner's participation in A&R-ing it. I thought it had the potential to be a really big record, but potential is very different to reality. Luckily enough, everything worked out. I think we were all grateful to find ourselves in a dream situation. We all came from what you might call career uncertainty, and once we got into Whitesnake everything suddenly started to roll. It seemed unstoppable."

YOU WENT ON TO PLAY ON ONE WHITESNAKE STUDIO ALBUM, 1989'S 'SLIP OF THE TONGUE'. DID YOU THINK IT COULD MATCH THE SALES OF '1987'?
"'Slip Of The Tongue' had as much or maybe even more potential than the '1987' record, because it was so unique. But the biggest difference between the two albums wasn't the different musicians who were involved, especially Steve Vai of course, it was the different input that John Kalodner had. I consider John a record industry genius and he was very involved with the '1987' record. But [David Coverdale's girlfriend at the time] Tawny Kitaen kept Kalodner away from participating in 'Slip Of The Tongue'. So John went up to Vancouver and spent all his time focusing on Aerosmith's album, which was 'Pump'. To me, that's the biggest difference in the success or otherwise of those two Whitesnake records."

YOU'RE STILL PLAYING AND PERFORMING TO THIS DAY, BUT IT'S FAIR TO SAY THAT YOU WERE A REAL FACE OF THE '80S US METAL SCENE. HOW DO YOU LOOK BACK ON THAT PERIOD OF YOUR LIFE NOW?
"For me the '80s was a very honest period of music and they were really my roots. What happened in the early part of the decade on Sunset Strip in Hollywood with bands like Dokken, Mötley Crüe, RATT and Quiet Riot was really formative for me. I have nothing but good memories of those times – but maybe that's also because I try not to be bitter about anything in my career!"

Interview by Howard Johnson. Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

IRON MAIDEN



THE MAKING

It could be argued that **Iron Maiden** is the most successful British heavy metal band of all time, with a 45-year career full of stellar highlights. *Howard Johnson* interviewed all six band members to find out how and why Maiden has worked so well for so long...

Photo: Getty Images/Ross Marino

OF A LEGEND

STEVE HARRIS

Steve Harris is the living embodiment of **Iron Maiden**, the man who has successfully steered the band through an amazing 45-year career. Here he talks about his enduring passion for Maiden and why he's as mad for it as ever...

BASSIST STEVE HARRIS IS Iron Maiden's undisputed leader, the force behind the legendary British heavy metal band since its inception way back in 1975. His unique vision, coupled with an extraordinary personal drive, helped Maiden become one of the world's biggest rock acts and sustain a remarkable career spanning more than 45 years. At the age of 64 Harris is still fit and strong, and as passionate about his band as ever he was. But the first thing you notice when you meet him is just how unassuming he is. At first it's hard to equate the low-key fella standing chatting with you offstage with the dynamo who competes with vocalist Bruce Dickinson to dominate proceedings onstage whenever they perform. Band manager Rod Smallwood admits that Maiden's iconic Eddie character was invented precisely because Harris was so shy and so quiet. Smallwood needed something, as he put it, "that could roar for the band."

Don't be fooled by that, though. Never one to shout his mouth off and take over a room, 'Harry' is nevertheless incredibly headstrong wherever Maiden is concerned. He's always had that clarity of purpose and is never one for turning once his mind's made up. Then again, why would he be? Iron Maiden's incredible success is testament to Harris's intuitive understanding of what rock fans really want. These days nobody is in any doubt that it's Steve Harris who calls the shots. So finding out what really makes Mr Maiden tick is an interesting exercise...

STEVE, ANOTHER YEAR, ANOTHER HUGE MAIDEN TOUR. IS IT A SOURCE OF GREAT SATISFACTION THAT THE BAND IS STILL SO COMMERCIALLY SUCCESSFUL FULLY 45 YEARS AFTER YOU FIRST STARTED?

"I think Rod gets excited about that kind of thing. He likes the figures. Bruce gets excited about all that too. When he's on stage he'll often say that there are so many thousand people in the hall that night. I don't really get all that excited about those kinds of things – but I'm not blasé about it either. It's fantastic that people still want to come and see us; it's brilliant and wonderful. But a few hundred more or a few hundred less at each gig wouldn't bother me. I'm not a bean counter. I never have been concerned about that. Of course everybody wants to sell out their gigs and with a band like Maiden people are amazed if we *don't* sell out a show. But does it really matter? I remember doing a gig in Oklahoma not that long ago where we did half of what we did in some of the other venues on the tour, and yet the reaction that night was fantastic, because the people who were there *really* wanted to be there. Some of those periphery people perhaps come because they simply want to be part of a rock'n'roll show. And there's nothing wrong with that either. But sometimes it can make the gigs a little less intense. You can't change that, of course, so we still go out and give 110 per cent no matter what. But in a weird way perhaps you give that little bit more at the shows where there are fewer people, because you feel you've got a point to prove."

MAIDEN IS IN THAT LUCKY POSITION WHERE YOU'VE RETAINED A HUGE PROPORTION OF YOUR ORIGINAL DIEHARD FANS, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ATTRACTING A LOT OF YOUNGER PEOPLE...

"That's right. We're very lucky, because that seems to happen naturally for us in most places. Funnily enough, the places where it doesn't happen quite as naturally are the UK and the US. So we consciously did something about that. We did the Ozzfest in the States back in 2005, because there were a lot of younger bands on the bill which meant there was a younger audience. We played before Sabbath, which was weird, because we hadn't gone on before someone else in the States since '82. But it worked really well. Then we did the same thing in the UK that same year when we did the Reading and Leeds Festivals. Those gigs tend to sell out no matter who's on the bill, so at Reading there were probably around 40,000 people, with maybe 8,000 to 10,000 Maiden fans. The rest of the crowd weren't. It was a challenge. You know you're not going to get the same reaction you normally do, even to the old stuff, because lots of people simply don't know it. But the trade off is that you're going to pick up new fans. So we did these things because they felt like the right thing to do at the time. And I find that if it feels right, then it usually *is* right."

WHAT DO YOU THINK THOSE YOUNGER FANS GET OUT OF COMING TO SEE IRON MAIDEN?

"I don't know – and I never try to second-guess those things. I remember being 11 or 12 and looking at the sixth formers in my school who were 16 and thinking they looked really old. So if I were 14 now looking at us – looking at us even 20 years ago – I'd be thinking, 'F*ck me, they look old.' But these days it's become much more acceptable for people to be old. A lot of rock musicians are still out there doing it and good luck to them. Years ago it was a young person's business, but it's not like that so much anymore. Maybe young people want to see older bands because it's a classic line-up, but I don't really know. It looks to me like our audience has regenerated

Photo: Getty Images/Chris Walter/WireImage

IRON MAIDEN

itself naturally because the fathers or the uncles and brothers are introducing the band to the kids, which is great. Maybe people come to the shows and think we're knocking on a bit, but I don't really know. Maybe they think we're jumping around more than most 30-year-olds! I hope they appreciate the fact that we're still out there doing it, still playing and still putting on a good show. Hopefully that's good enough for them. Families now go to gigs together. When we were younger we wanted our own things and our parents weren't on the same wavelength as we were at all. We used to be stratospheres apart. It's different now. My kids like a lot of the things I like. And if it's not exactly the same bands, at least they're into a type of music that is pretty much compatible with mine. It's very different to how it used to be. Sure, there are probably a few out there thinking, 'What a bunch of old farts. I can't get into this.' But I don't think there are that many, because if something has musical integrity you can feel it. You've got guys like Aerosmith, the Stones and Scorpions who are older than us – and they're still doing it too."

"WE'VE GOT SO MANY SONGS TO CHOOSE FROM THAT WE CAN KEEP THINGS FRESH ALL THE TIME. IF SOMEONE IN THE BAND WAS FED UP WITH A PARTICULAR SONG AND DIDN'T WANT TO PLAY IT ANY MORE, THEN WE WOULDN'T PLAY IT. I'D BE FINE WITH THAT, BECAUSE WE'VE GOT SH*TLOADS OF OTHER SONGS TO PLAY."

YOU ALWAYS SEEM TO BE INCREDIBLY ON TOP OF EVERY ASPECT OF THE MAIDEN MACHINE. WHERE DOES THAT DESIRE TO STILL BE INVOLVED TO THAT LEVEL OF DETAIL COME FROM?

"People think I'm a control freak, but I'm actually not. There's nothing I like more than having someone who's really good do a lot of the grunt work. Believe me, I don't want to do all that myself and I don't really have time to do it either. It's great having someone you can trust, but finding those people is the hard bit. So, much as I might like things to be different, I think it's the best situation for me and for the band that I'm always this involved, because I'm always looking out for things to make sure Maiden sounds and looks as good as it possibly can. I always have done and always will do. I'm the best bet to get the best result, because I'm not going to let anything slip. I'll make sure we come across the best way possible under any given circumstances. It's not a control thing. It's about getting the best out of everything we do."

DO YOU EVER WORRY THAT THE ENERGY YOU INVEST IN ALL THAT BUSINESS STUFF CAN TAKE AWAY FROM YOUR ONSTAGE ENERGY? YOU'RE 64 AFTER ALL...

"Well I try to look after myself, so that it isn't a problem. I go running a lot. Rod goes, 'Why do you need to go running when you're on tour? You're up on stage every night jumping around like a bloody madman!' I say, 'Rod, that's *why* I can jump around like a madman.' The hardest thing, though, is if you're not feeling well. If you pick something up on tour then everything is so difficult. But that would be the same if I were 20 years younger, so it's not an age thing. I think that as a band we still have energy. We're smart about how we tour these days and I think that helps. We still do long tours in comparison with a lot of people, but they're nothing compared to what we used to do. We had a band discussion a while back about how we were going to do things going forward and I think we made the right decision. It's best for us to tour every year for a shorter amount of time, rather than tour for seven months and then have a year off. My view is that at our age, and when you're trying to stay match

Iron Maiden photographed in Saginaw, Michigan, 16 March 1987. L-R: Steve Harris (bass), Bruce Dickinson (vocals, no pants), Nicko McBrain (drums), Adrian Smith (guitar), Dave Murray (guitar)

fit, you're better off staying in shape by doing a blast of shows every year and not getting rusty. Plus the way we do it means our energy levels are high, because we're doing it for three months not six months."

IS IT HARD FOR YOU TO MAINTAIN YOUR ENTHUSIASM FOR MAIDEN'S MUSIC AFTER BEING IN THE BAND FOR SO MANY YEARS?

"No. The thing is, we've got so many songs to choose from that we can keep things fresh all the time. It's never actually happened, but if someone in the band was fed up with a particular song and didn't want to play it any more, then we wouldn't play it. I'd be fine with that, because we've got sh*tloads of other songs to play. Not a problem. We've dropped 'Run To The Hills' before, and there was probably a time when we couldn't drop that song from the set because it was such an important number for us. Now we can, because we've got loads and loads of choice. We can drop a song easily, with the bonus that when we bring it back it feels fresh again."

HOW DO YOU KEEP CHALLENGING YOURSELF AS A BASS PLAYER?

"Good question. I'm not sure I've ever thought about challenging myself as a bass player, because it's always been about the song. I've never thought, 'On the next thing I do I'm going to do something outrageously different.' I don't know if other bass players feel like that, but for me it's always been about songs. Some of the songs we play are more technical than others and it's down to me to make sure the rhythm section is working right for any particular song. If that means me playing straighter on some things, or more busily on others, then so be it. It just so happens that the songs we've been doing for the last few years don't require as much technical bass playing. It's more about holding down a rhythm and a vibe and a feel than about speed or technical wizardry. I could put bass lines all over the place, and I could have put bass lines all over the place on some of the things we did in the early days. But then it would just have become a quagmire of technique with no light and shade. To me a song is all about dynamics. For example, 'Children Of The Damned' starts off pretty straight and then you're off into playing fast triplets. But that's what the song requires. I could do bass runs to make myself look good, but that's not what Maiden's been about. It's been a team effort and it's been about making the song right. I used to have arguments with Nicko about this. A lot of drummers don't think about the dynamics of the song and to be fair to Nick he thinks about it a lot more now than he used to. Sometimes less is more. If you're doing eight drum rolls all over the place, then the ninth one that's amazing doesn't sound amazing any more because you've already heard eight drum rolls before it. Now Nicko does lots of drum rolls in 'The Trooper' and when we were recording it it sounded right for the song, it enhanced things. So it's not a hard and fast rule. But if something doesn't enhance the song then I'm all over it to get rid of it."

WHAT HAVE YOU HAD TO GIVE UP FOR THE IRON MAIDEN CAUSE THAT YOU WISH YOU HADN'T HAD TO?

"I never really looked at things that way, because I always felt whatever I might have given up was for the good of the band – and that was all I thought about. If you dwell on too many things thinking, 'I shouldn't have given up this and that,' then it will drive you crazy. I've always done what needs to be done and sometimes that comes at a cost, time-wise and family-wise. The only real pain – and it still is to this day – is that you can't plan anything much in advance. That can be annoying, but to be honest it's a small price to pay for what I've done. There are certain family things that have had to suffer, though sometimes it's a blessing in disguise if you don't want to go to a wedding or whatever! No, I'm joking. Also, I would have loved to have seen some bands play live, and haven't been able to because we've been busy doing our own thing. And then when you do get some time off you often just need to rest. I sometimes can't be bothered to fly somewhere to see a band because I've been flying here, there and everywhere over the last few months. Sometimes I'd like to go and see my football team, West Ham, play a bit more. But that's more my own fault because I don't live in England any more. But even so, I think I've watched all of every game bar one, when I happened to be on a flight somewhere. The missus booked that flight of course, not me! But it's all minor in the scheme of things. There's not much I regret about anything. I don't think like that. It is what it is."

FINALLY, DO YOU EVER THINK ABOUT RETIREMENT?

"Not really. You've got to earn a living, haven't you? And if it came down to it we'd probably say we *can't* retire yet. Or maybe it's just that we don't want to retire. I don't really know. I definitely don't know what the position of the rest of the guys in the band is financially. I hope everyone would say they're in Iron Maiden because they *want* to be – and that getting paid well is simply a very nice bonus. If I didn't want to do as much stuff I could make that happen and I'm sure no one would have a problem. But I'm very aware that the more time goes on every gig is sacred, because we know this can't go on forever. I said that a long time ago, but it's still true. I still enjoy gigging and the others do too. I guess at the end of the day it's fairly simple. I'm still loving Iron Maiden."

Photos: Getty Images/Paul Natkin; Getty Images/Ross Marino

BRUCE DICKINSON

Maiden's frontman is known for his many different skill sets, but it's still the music that matters most to him...

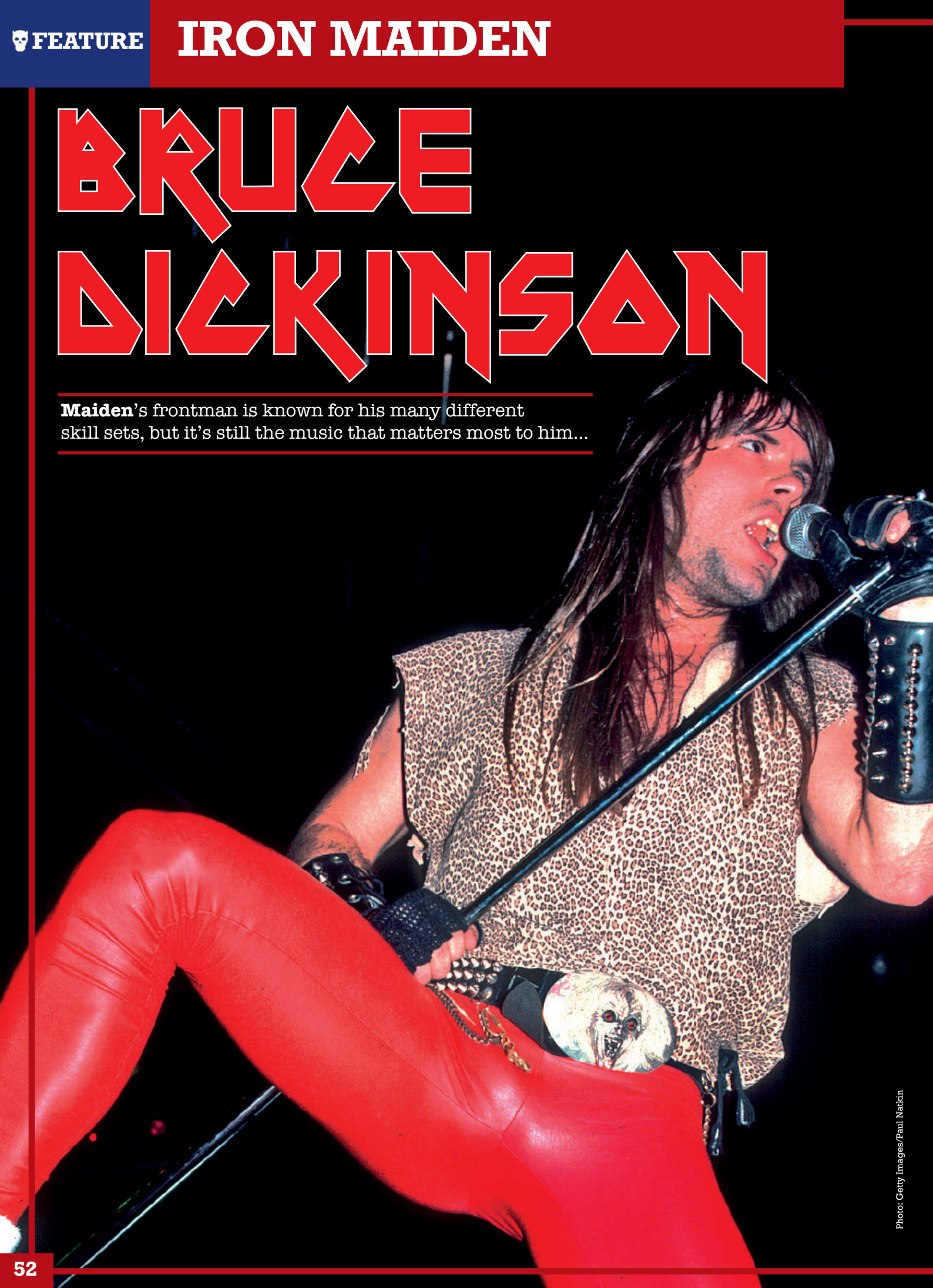


Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

BRUCE DICKINSON IS THE voice of Iron Maiden. He wasn't there at the start of the band's recording career – that honour falls to Paul Di'Anno – but his 'Air Raid Siren' approach and huge stage presence was vital in propelling Maiden to the position of one of the planet's premier rock bands. By the mid-'80s the group was a worldwide phenomenon and is still one of the biggest live draws on the road today. Between 1993 and 1999 Dickinson chose to pursue a career outside of Iron Maiden, but there's no doubt that his return helped re-establish the band as one of metal's most successful and enduring acts.

WHEN YOU FIRST JOINED MAIDEN BACK IN 1981 COULD YOU EVER HAVE FORESEEN THE STELLAR CAREER YOU'VE ENJOYED?

"To be honest I don't spend much time thinking about where we are today in comparison to where we've been in the past. The key to it has always been the fact that we've *always* done exactly what we wanted to do, and the music has *always* been independent of any aspect of fashion, or media pressure, or peer pressure. Some other bands seem to worry about that sort of thing. We don't, and for good or evil that's worked for us."

> "THE SUCCESS IS ABSOLUTELY IMPORTANT TO ME. STEVE'S NOT BOTHERED ABOUT ALL THAT, BECAUSE HE'S HAPPY PLAYING TO 40 PEOPLE IN HIS OTHER BAND, BRITISH LION. BUT IF IRON MAIDEN WERE PLAYING TO 40 PEOPLE THEY'D BE DOING IT WITH A DIFFERENT SINGER.'"

YOU'VE BEEN SINGING THE MAIDEN CLASSICS FOR WELL OVER 35 YEARS NOW. DO YOU STILL HAVE AN EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT WITH SONGS THAT YOU'VE SUNG HUNDREDS, IF NOT THOUSANDS, OF TIMES?

"I still have huge emotional involvement with them because they're great songs. And the thing is, we haven't really been doing them over 35 years. I can't remember the last time we'd played 'Children Of The Damned' before 2016, for example, and so when people heard it again they just went, 'Wow, cool. They're playing 'Children Of The Damned!'' It's awesome to see that response and singing it is part of that, you get caught up in it. That even happens with old 'Number Of The Beast', bless it. I have to say, though, that 'Fear Of The Dark' is perhaps the one that we really have done to death."

DO YOU EVER ANALYSE YOUR PAST PERFORMANCES?

"I don't listen to anything. I just take it all as it comes, because whatever the performance was is what it was. My attitude is very much, 'Ask yourself this. Look at the audience. Did they love it? Answer? Yes. End of story. Go home, have a beer, relax.' When you wake up it's a new day, a new show. A live event is a live event and there's so much other stuff going on that contributes to the feel of it. Now not everyone takes the same view. Adrian will moan that Nicko is playing too fast and Janick will say it's because it's exciting. But for me it's a question of 'Yeah, whatever.' There's another gig to do and I can't carry one night's grumpiness into the following show."

HAVE THERE EVER BEEN TIMES WHEN YOU'VE FELT LIKE YOU WERE SIMPLY CLOCKING ON FOR WORK? THAT SINGING IN IRON MAIDEN WAS JUST A JOB?

"I can't deny that there have been odd times here and there when that's happened. But by and large the answer is no. What has made it really special for me on the last few tours – and what will make it special on future tours – is that having... well, I wouldn't call it a 'near death experience' [Bruce was diagnosed with throat cancer in 2015, but was fully recovered by 2016] ... but having a brush with mortality and having 'You might never sing again' type thoughts, well every day is a privilege."

HOW DOES THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS WORK IN IRON MAIDEN, GENERALLY?

"It depends on the project, but usually things bounce around the house between Steve, Rod, and myself. We'll be pinging emails around between us, talking about stage shows and things like that. We tend to stick our thumbs in the air and go 'How about this? How about that?' You wait to see what feels right, really, and inevitably it's always a compromise. Steve likes to be comfortable – you have to work really hard to get him to do anything he's not comfortable with. But if it's something you really believe in, then it's worth going the extra mile to convince him by saying, 'I really think this would be a good idea.' There's no ego involved in it with Steve. But he is very stubborn. He's very set in his ways once he gets a bee in his bonnet about something. But it's not ego, it's just his personality. I think he probably would say the same about me, but there you go. That's how it works."

IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU THAT IRON MAIDEN REMAINS SUCCESSFUL? WOULD YOU BE DOING IT EVEN IF PEOPLE STOPPED TURNING UP TO SEE YOU?

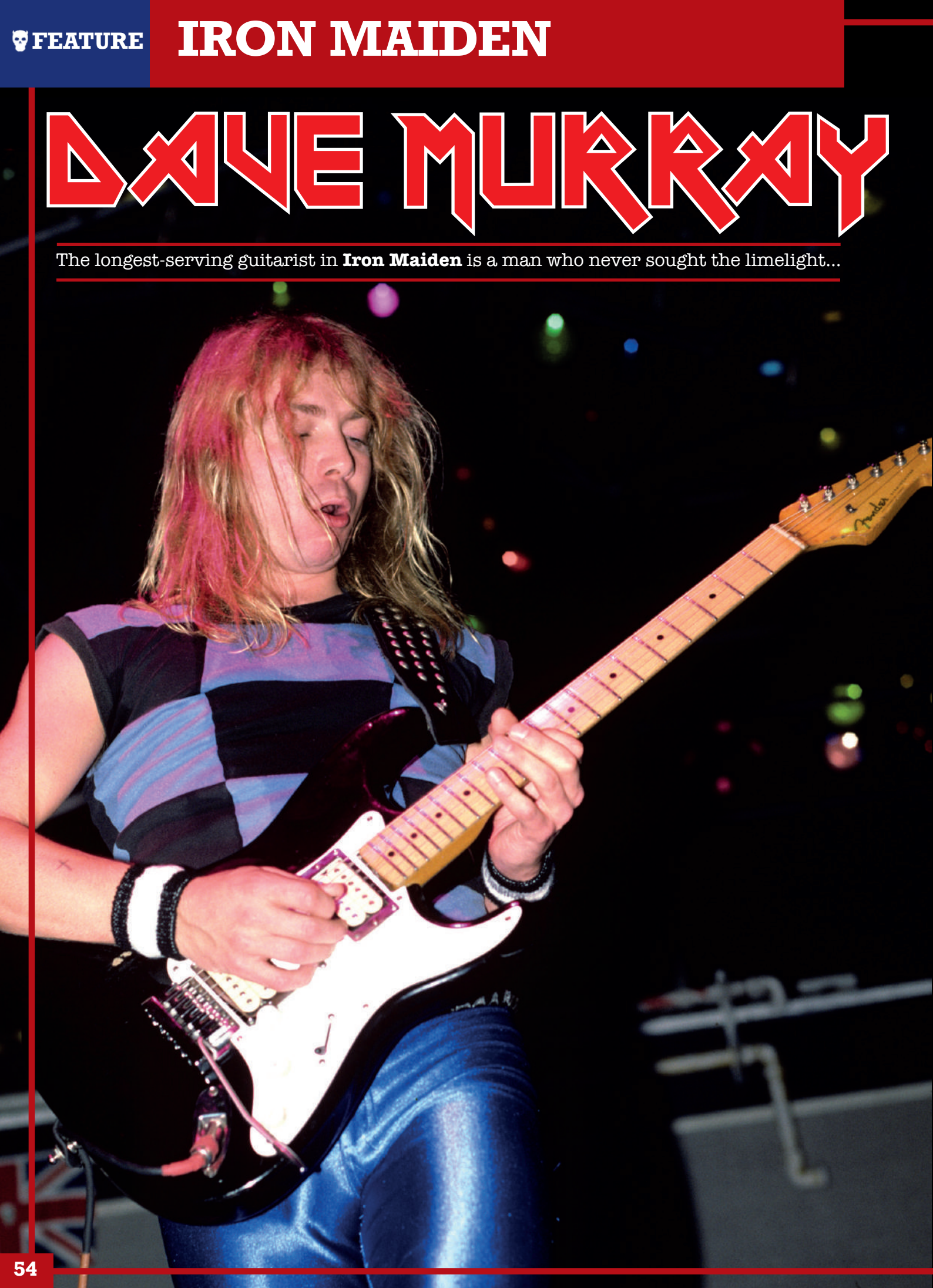
"The success is absolutely important to me. Steve's not bothered about all that, because he's happy playing to 40 people in his other band, British Lion. But if Iron Maiden were playing to 40 people they'd be doing it with a different singer. Fortunately we seem to attract a good number of young fans, which keeps rejuvenating things. To be honest I'd get worried if I looked out at the audience and saw lots of people as old as me. There's a big part of the Maiden audience that's younger, and that's terrific. And I can tell you that you really do notice it if you get an old crowd. In certain parts of the US you sometimes get this really old audience and I'll be asking myself, 'I wonder if they're enjoying it?' How would you know? They just sit around looking at each other. It's a bit sad, really. It's not like that everywhere in the US, though. You really want places like, say, San Bernardino. Loads of kids down the front all having a great time and really getting into it. That's why I do what I do and that's why we do it collectively. I'm not interested in having a TV audience. Just no! I could never, ever cope with that. If Maiden's audience ever turns into that it's definitely time to quit. Mind you, I don't want the Maiden audience to be just knuckleheads either. There are some people who have no concept of light, shade, or emotion. Everything has to be violent and that's just bollocks. I'm not interested in that."

YOU'RE KNOWN FOR DOING A LOT OF THINGS OUTSIDE OF IRON MAIDEN, BUT IS THE BAND STILL THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR CREATIVE LIFE?

"The music is the most important backdrop and the anchor of everything I do. I think the band is as strong as it's ever been, without a doubt. It's a thing of great power to stand in front of that band. It's quite an amazing feeling, actually."

DAVE MURRAY

The longest-serving guitarist in **Iron Maiden** is a man who never sought the limelight...



GUITARIST DAVE MURRAY, 63, has been in Iron Maiden longer than anyone besides founder and bassist Steve Harris. The man from the London suburb of Edmonton joined the group in 1976 and, after dropping out for a short period in the very early days, has been there ever since. His fluid, melodic playing style, coupled with a seriously laid-back persona, has made Murray the polar opposite of so many ego-driven rock guitarists, always happy to take a back seat and leave the limelight to Harris and vocalist Bruce Dickinson. Though he rarely talks to the press, Murray is always engaging and thoughtful once you manage to coax him into opening up...

TELL ME DAVE, HOW DO YOU THINK OF YOURSELF AFTER SO MANY YEARS IN IRON MAIDEN? AS 'DAVE MURRAY', OR AS 'DAVE MURRAY OF IRON MAIDEN'?

"I always see myself as Dave Murray, definitely, and that's good for my sanity. On tour I get myself into playing mode before the gig and when I'm onstage I'm totally there. But when I come off at the end of a show I'm often totally divorced from the person who's been playing up onstage. I leave the stage behind and detach myself from the band. When I'm on the road, most of the time I'm doing normal things – playing tennis and golf, hanging out with friends... Then when I'm off the road I step away from Iron Maiden totally and I'm just a normal person. If you live your life as the guy up on stage playing in a band in front of millions of people, it will eat you up and destroy you. You can't take all that attention too seriously, and while I love playing guitar in Maiden, that one thing isn't enough. There's more to life than just the band. I like to be under the radar and incognito."

HAVE YOU ALWAYS FELT THAT WAY?

"I think I had at least some of that perspective from the earliest days. I was probably more absorbed in the whole thing 30 years ago, sleeping in the back of tour buses, having a jolly, and hanging out together. So I guess there was more of an attachment to it back then, especially at the point when the band first started breaking. Maybe it was exciting to be getting the attention, but I've always been fairly private. I never wanted to be one thousand per cent into one thing and I think that's a healthy attitude."

YOU DON'T SEEM TO HAVE THAT TRADITIONAL ROCK GUITARIST'S EGO...

"There are people who throw themselves in front of the paparazzi because they want to be high profile all the time. I'm the opposite. If there are any cameras lurking I immediately go in the opposite direction. Why? Because playing in a band is all I need. When we started there were no cell phones and there was no social media, but now your whole life is under the microscope as an actor or as a musician. If you do something, anything, it's going to be splattered everywhere and magnified a hundred times. That's not me at all, so I don't do Facebook and I don't do Twitter. To be honest, I don't even look at the Iron Maiden website. Maybe if we're on tour and if my itinerary's not in the room and I can't be bothered getting up to get it, maybe *then* I'll go to our website to see where I'm supposed to be in a couple of days' time. But that's it. I really don't want to read about us and I certainly don't want to read other people's opinions of us, because I don't care what other people think. There are certain people who shouldn't be allowed to air their obnoxious opinions, so if someone asks me whether I want to see what people are writing about us on Facebook, I just say 'No thanks.'"

DO YOU STILL HAVE VIVID RECOLLECTIONS OF YOUR EARLY DAYS AS AN ASPIRING GUITARIST?

"I do actually, yes. I can still remember when I started playing at 14 or 15, auditioning for bands. I was answering all the ads in the *Melody Maker* [the newspaper where all of Britain's aspiring musicians looked for openings] and going for auditions every week. I probably played in something like a hundred bands before Iron Maiden."

BUT DID YOU IMMEDIATELY FEEL THAT MAIDEN WAS DIFFERENT ONCE YOU PLAYED WITH THEM?

"I did. As soon as I met Steve I instinctively felt that was it. You know, he showed me some songs he'd written – 'Wrathchild', 'Iron Maiden' and something else that I can't remember. And I knew immediately that there was something special there, and that this guy Steve Harris had something special about him. I felt that the two of us could really do something together, but I didn't have any concrete ideas, really. I guess my only goal at first was to be able to leave work and play music professionally. I didn't think about a long-term future. The only person who ever brought that kind of thing up was my dad. When we got our record deal with EMI in 1979 the first thing my dad said to me was, 'If you're packing your job in, what are you going to do about a pension when you're 65?' My dad was wise! He'd thought about all that stuff, but I hadn't. Honestly, I was paid more when I was working than I was with the band when I first became a professional musician. But I didn't care. I was waking up on a Monday morning thinking, 'Wow, I don't have to go into work today.' I was just thinking about living in the moment, doing 40 shows in 40 days, all that crazy stuff. It was 'Bring it on! I love it!'"

"AS SOON AS I MET STEVE I INSTINCTIVELY FELT THAT WAS IT. I KNEW THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING SPECIAL THERE, AND THAT THIS GUY STEVE HARRIS HAD SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT HIM. I FELT THAT THE TWO OF US COULD REALLY DO SOMETHING TOGETHER."

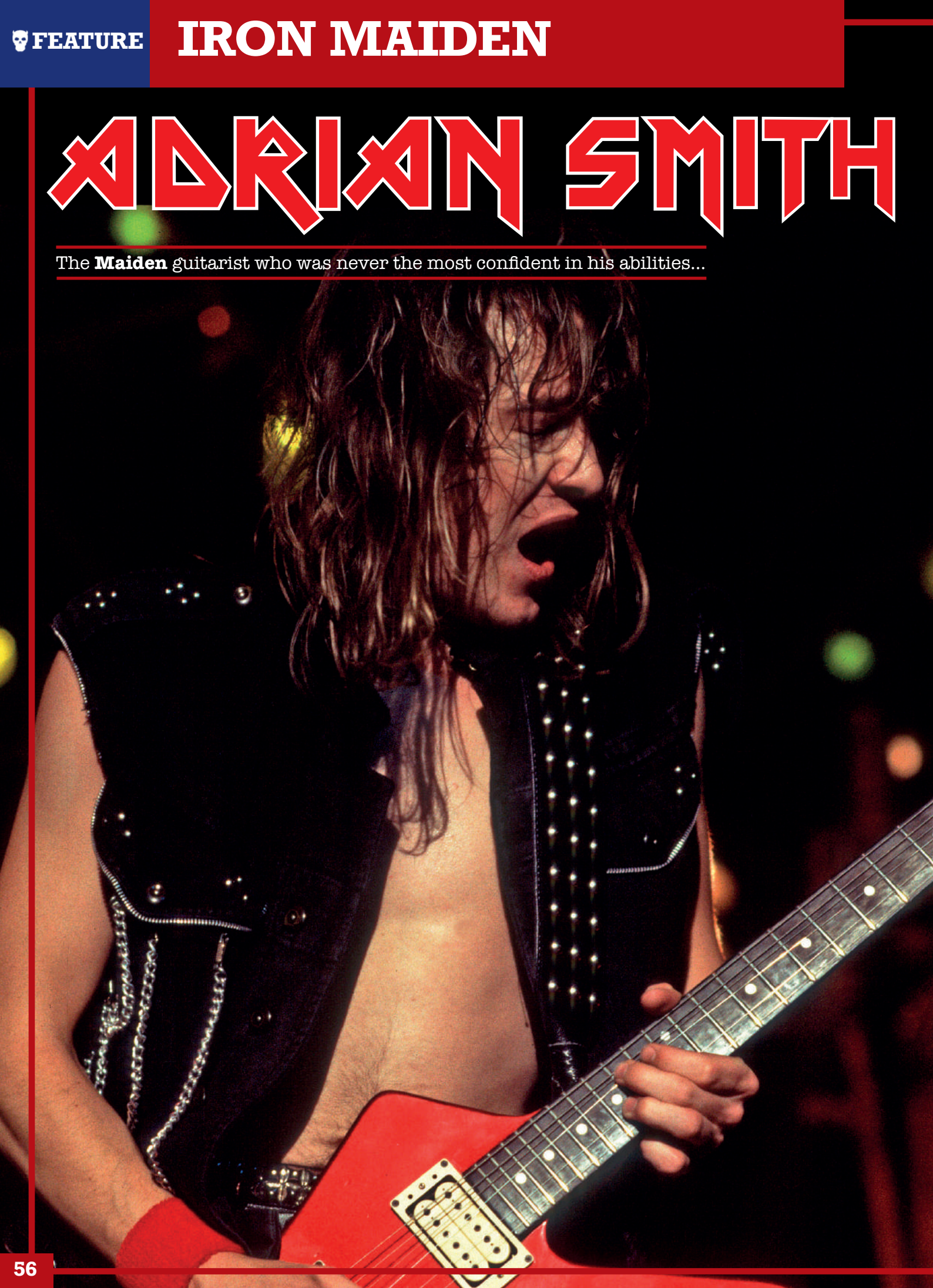
COULD YOU HAVE EVEN IMAGINED STILL BEING IN IRON MAIDEN MORE THAN 40 YEARS LATER?

"Not in a million years. What you have to remember is that rock music was relatively new back then, and the lifespan of bands seemed so short – maybe four or five years. A group would appear and it would be maximum energy, maximum touring and getting huge. Then suddenly either the band exploded, something went wrong, or someone passed away. I thought Maiden would last maybe three or four years. But even back then I liked a lot of old American blues music, stuff like BB King and Buddy Guy, and they were 20 or 30 years older than me and still playing... A couple of years ago Janick and I were in a blues club in Chicago, just watching a blues band playing. Suddenly this cool dude came in. He had a long coat on, was wearing a big hat and was dripping in gold. Well, he got his guitar out of his case, got up on stage, plugged his guitar in, and started playing some amazing blues. And he was about 70 years old! Janick and I turned to each other and said, '*That's* what we want to be doing when we're his age.'"

Photo: Getty Images/Ebet Roberts/Redferns

ADRIAN SMITH

The **Maiden** guitarist who was never the most confident in his abilities...



GUITARIST ADRIAN 'H' SMITH, 63, first joined Iron Maiden in 1980, replacing Dennis Stratton who'd played on the band's debut album. H had already played with his friend and Maiden guitarist Dave Murray in a number of earlier outfits, including Stone Free and Evil Ways, which eventually became Urchin. His intuitive understanding with Murray helped define Maiden's robust yet melodic twin-guitar attack throughout the '80s, as they quickly moved from being up-and-coming metal contenders to one of the most popular rock bands on the planet.

Dissatisfied with his role in the group, Adrian left Iron Maiden in 1990, going on to record two albums with his band Psycho Motel before hooking up with vocalist Bruce Dickinson, who had himself left Maiden in 1993. Both musicians re-joined Maiden in 1999 and remain in the rejuvenated six-piece line-up to this day...

ADRIAN, WHAT DO YOU THINK NOW WHEN YOU LOOK BACK ON YOUR EARLIEST DAYS IN IRON MAIDEN?

"Maiden was a very different band with Paul Di'Anno on those first two albums, so I think of a group that was more hard rock with a punk attitude than it is now. The tempo of the songs was different back then. By nature Steve gets stuck in and he plays fast, so maybe in the early days that was part of it, the youthfulness and the raw energy. Maiden always had the musicality, but now we restrain that energy and let the music breathe a little bit. Of course the band's history is all over YouTube now. I can search for old Maiden stuff and, you know, a German TV show from 1981 will come up. But what's nice about things like that is that usually my memory of those events is that we were terrible, but actually we were alright. I listen back to things like 'Innocent Exile' and 'Remember Tomorrow' now and I think they were quite unique. What I also think when I look back on the early days now is that it was non-stop. But we were young and we just did it, because that was what we had to do."

WHEN I FIRST MET YOU WAY BACK WHEN, I REMEMBER THINKING THAT YOU LACKED REAL CONFIDENCE AS A GUITARIST...

"I think that's a fair comment. I did compare myself to other players technically when I was younger – and not very favourably. I remember we were gearing up for a tour once and Rod said, 'We've got MSG supporting.' I said, 'Hold on, Michael Schenker's going to be playing *before* me? I grew up listening to Michael Schenker and he's a genius guitar player. How am I going to do that?' It was difficult. I grew up playing and singing, so was always more of a second guitarist. I usually had a virtuoso to lean on. I'd already been playing for five or six years when Van Halen happened and all the kids got into that. Then all of a sudden every band we played with seemed to have a virtuoso who'd learned from Eddie Van Halen, and that bothered me. I was very insecure about that. Then in the '80s along came guitarists like Yngwie Malmsteen. I'd ask myself whether your limits as a guitar player simply depended on how much you put into it, or whether everyone had a natural level. If I were one of those guys who could sit and practise for six hours a day like Malmsteen, could I have been that good? In the end I don't think I could've been, because if you have five guys and ask them to run as fast as they can, some will always finish ahead of the others. They just have the genes for it. In the end I learnt to deal with this feeling of inadequacy and came to the conclusion that I'm just not that type of guitar player. I sit down and play what I'm hearing in my head, rather than coldly playing this or that scale. But I have total admiration for people who can do that."

YOU NEVER SEEMED HAPPY WITH YOUR LIVE SOUND...

"I used to have terrible sound issues. Sometimes in the old days Steve used to play so loud that the monitoring system couldn't cope. When Bruce first joined the band he was competing with Steve and it became a bit of a battle – all you could hear was piercing vocals and thundering bass. It was a nightmare and it used to really get me down. People don't know what it's like to have to battle an atrocious sound and make out like you're having a great time. I could never pull that off. I'd always make a face and stand at the back next to my amp and make it obvious that I wasn't enjoying myself. I wanted to say, 'F*ck, look what I'm having to deal with,' which I suppose wasn't very professional. Now it's so much easier, because we have in-ear monitors where you set your own preferred individual mix, so the world is a completely different place. Playing live is a pleasure now. It makes the whole experience miles better. But I think I've earned it. I've paid my dues."

> "WE WERE GEARING UP FOR A TOUR ONCE AND ROD SAID, 'WE'VE GOT MSG SUPPORTING.' I SAID, 'HOLD ON, MICHAEL SCHENKER'S GOING TO BE PLAYING *BEFORE* ME? I GREW UP LISTENING TO MICHAEL SCHENKER AND HE'S A GENIUS GUITAR PLAYER. HOW AM I GOING TO DO THAT?'"

LIKE BRUCE, YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE NOT TO BE IN IRON MAIDEN. HOW DID THAT FEEL?

"It had been building up for a while, so when I left the band [in 1990] it was a bit of a relief to be off the treadmill. Maybe people thought I had other ambitions and that was why I left, but I didn't really have a plan for what I was going to do. I had my ASAP project going, but it was so different to Maiden that it was very hard to get any traction with it. I did go to America to try to promote the album and did lots of radio stuff. I was ringing up record stores and saying, 'Have you heard about my record?', so it was a very different experience. I enjoyed it, to be honest, because it was all on me. But it had its downsides too, because you had to deal with every single facet of the process, from finding musicians to getting a producer and locating a studio. It was a pain in the arse, but at the end of the day people wanted to talk to me about my music, which was very personal. That was nice. But it was nice to come back to Maiden too."

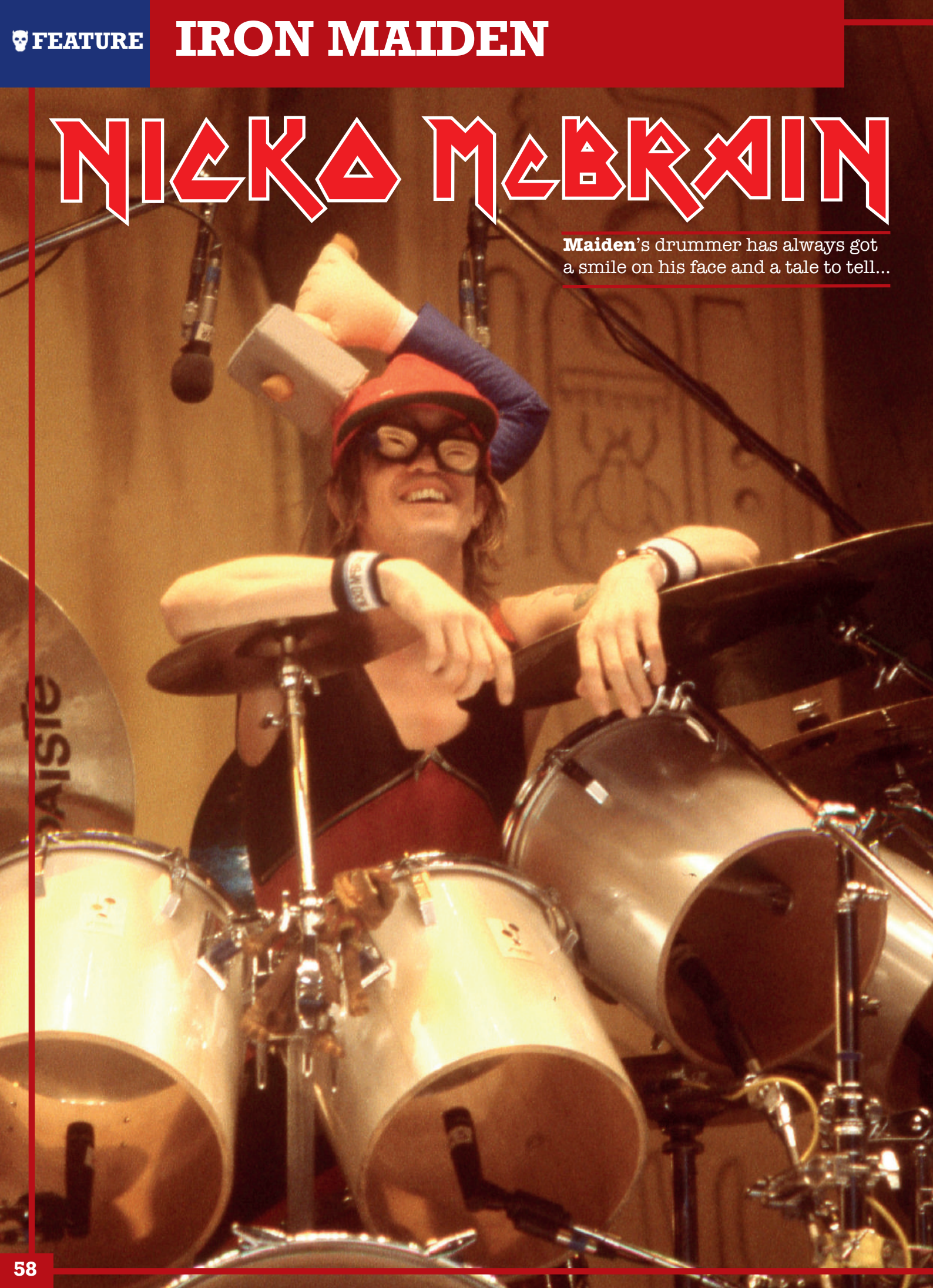
WHAT DO YOU THINK NOW ABOUT YOUR PHENOMENAL SUCCESS WITH IRON MAIDEN?

"That you need people who believe in you and that you need help. We had one thing in our favour when we started out and that was that you could always go on the dole [UK unemployment benefit] and get a bit of money, so you could concentrate on your playing and on your band. That was vital when you were living at home and your dad suddenly got fed up with you and told you to get a real job! And let's not forget that you need a great manager. They have to be as passionate as you are, because managing a band, even at a low level, is a full-time job. We were so lucky, because Rod Smallwood is a genius. When he took us on he already had experience of working for a booking agency, so he knew how things worked. Finding a manager like that is as rare as finding a band like Iron Maiden."

Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

NICKO McBRAIN

Maiden's drummer has always got a smile on his face and a tale to tell...



IRON MAIDEN DRUMMER NICKO McBrain, 67, has been the powerhouse keeping the band at the top of the hard rock tree since he made his recording debut with the group on 1983's 'Piece Of Mind' album. Having first made his name as an excellent sticksman with Streetwalkers, Pat Travers and Trust, Nicko was chosen to replace Clive Burr in Maiden and has been with the band ever since. As the acknowledged loudest and most outgoing member of the group, it's always fun to talk to a man whose larger-than-life character hasn't changed one iota over the years...

IRON MAIDEN'S BEEN IN EXISTENCE FOR 45 YEARS NOW, NICKO. WHAT DO YOU PUT THE BAND'S LONGEVITY DOWN TO?

"The greatest thing about this band is that we're all very selfish. What I mean by that is that we've always done exactly what we wanted to do. We love playing together as a band, and making the music we want to make has always been the most important thing for all of us. It might sound a bit weird to say that selfish is good, but being selfish is *great* in the music industry. It means that we don't get swayed by pop culture or fashion statements. We still have the same passion for what we do that we had when I first joined."

WHICH MAIDEN TRACKS HAVE THE MOST MAGIC FOR YOU?

"Well 'Hallowed Be Thy Name' is my favourite of all time to play, and 'Where Eagles Dare' is right up there too, especially given the hell I had to go through to get it right when we first recorded it! I also really enjoy playing 'Children Of The Damned' because it has an almost funky groove, which is a bit different for Maiden. Plus once it gets going it's mayhem and mischief right to the end of the song – and I can get the gong out!"

DO YOU EVER LISTEN TO OLD RECORDINGS?

"Overall I tend to think that looking back is wrong. You're far better off looking forward to the next challenges in your life. But every so often I'll do it, and sometimes I'll surprise myself. I'll go, 'Well done Nick. You laid a nice little groove down there.' I'll whack on some Maiden from time to time, but I'll tend to think more about sounds than performance. Maybe I won't like the snare drum sound or something like that. But I don't really critique my performance, saying 'I wish I hadn't done that' or 'I wish I had done that.' Why? Because it was already critiqued at the time. If it wasn't right in the studio, then it would have been sorted there and then. It was what it was and it is what it is, and that's what it will always be."

IS THERE ONE PARTICULAR GIG WITH IRON MAIDEN THAT STANDS OUT FOR YOU?

"There is, actually, Rock In Rio when we headlined it in 2001. I remember walking on stage and swelling up the cymbals and having to stop. I looked out and thought, 'F*cking hell, I can't see the end of the crowd.' It was f*cking nuts! 250,000 plus waiting to hear you play! You're only really playing to the first few rows because that's all you can see, but even so..."

THAT'S A LOT OF MAIDEN FANS. ARE YOU SURPRISED BY HOW LOYAL THIS GROUP'S SUPPORTERS ARE?

"There's a Maiden Army, isn't there? And they're the best fans in the world, without a doubt. I'm extremely grateful for that. But honestly, what I'm about is playing with the guys in the band. It's a bit selfish, really, but we do it for us and I don't care whether anyone else likes us or not. Well I do, because our fans keep us going. But you know what I mean. That sounds very harsh and brutal, but that's just me. What drives me is the thrill I get out of playing music with the other five members of Iron Maiden."

DO YOU THINK BRUCE AND ADRIAN LEAVING THE BAND IN THE '90S MADE EVERYONE ON BOTH SIDES REALISE WHAT THEY WERE MISSING?

"Maybe so, but that was The Man Upstairs who had it all planned. Bruce left the band and buggered off for six or seven years, but God was saying to him, 'You're going to go off for a few years and then come back and have a better career than you had before.' I believe it's divine intervention, because you couldn't have scripted it. You know, the singer goes, the band does two albums with another singer who doesn't really cut it, but who's a great guy. That could have been the demise of Iron Maiden. But it really wasn't, was it?"

"THERE'S A MAIDEN ARMY, ISN'T THERE? AND THEY'RE THE BEST FANS IN THE WORLD, WITHOUT A DOUBT. I'M EXTREMELY GRATEFUL FOR THAT. BUT HONESTLY, WHAT I'M ABOUT IS PLAYING WITH THE GUYS IN THE BAND."

YOU WERE INITIALLY AGAINST THE IDEA OF ADRIAN COMING BACK, WEREN'T YOU?

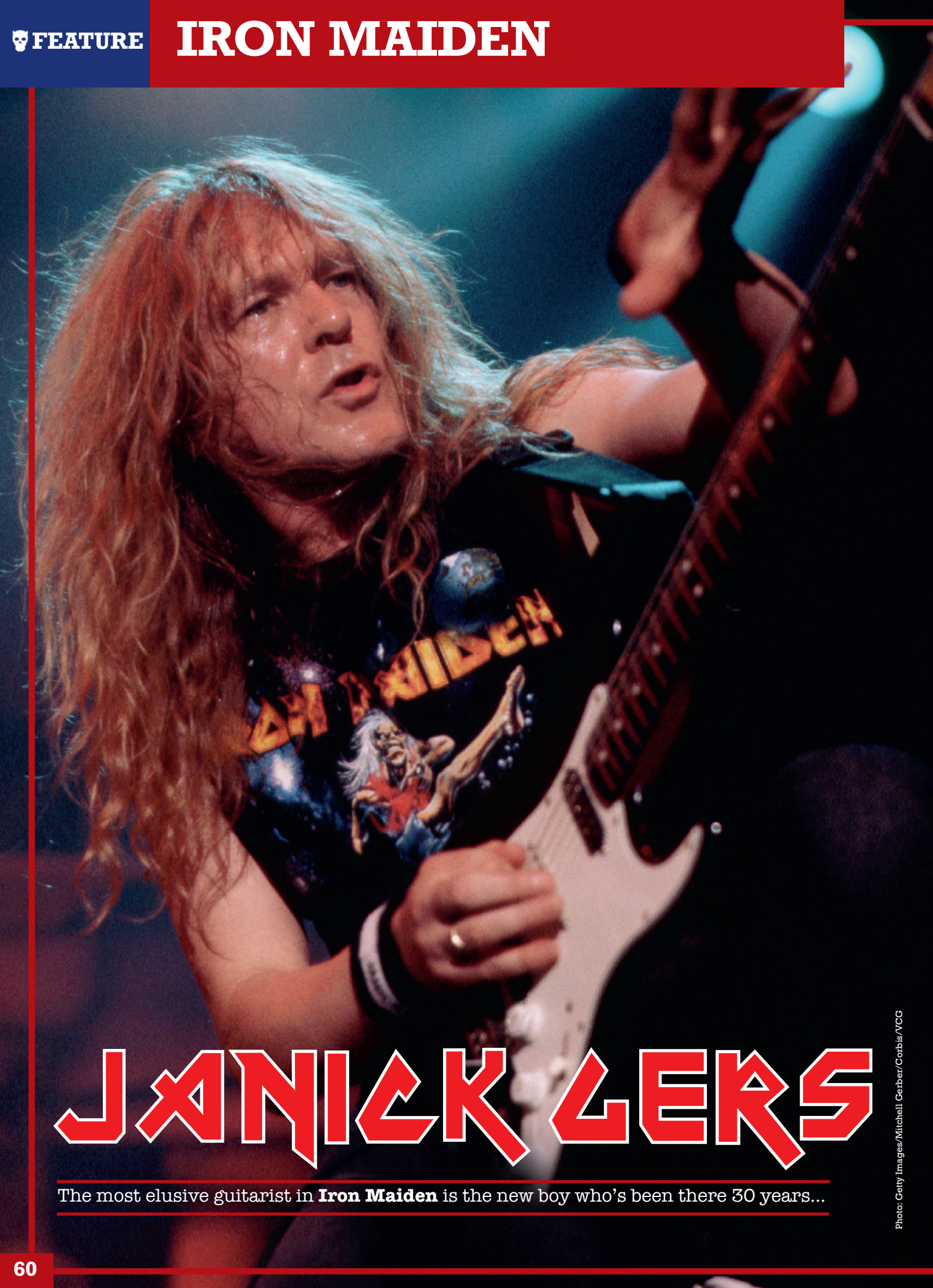
"I was. I'll never forget it. We were touring Japan and lots of us were in this really small sake bar in Tokyo one night. Rod saw me and said, 'Come here, this affects you. Get your arse over here now.' Then he started talking. 'Well, you know that we're going to get Bruce back in the band, right?' 'Yes, I've heard rumours.' 'Well, we're thinking of bringing Adrian with him.' Of course, this was the first I'd heard of it, because I'm always the last in the band to hear anything! And then Jan said, 'And I'm thinking of stepping down.' I said, 'You ain't going anywhere mate,' and then said to Rod, 'What do you mean we're getting Adrian back?' 'It's a bloody great idea, isn't it?' he said. And I said, 'No, because we're a five-man, two-guitar band and that's the way we like it. And it's not a good idea, because then we've got to split the gig pot six ways!' I said to Rod, 'If that's the case, then are you going to take less commission so we can afford to pay for another fella?' And that went down like a fart in a two-man submarine. It was hilarious! So I went to see Steve, and said, 'I've heard about Adrian and I don't think it's a good idea.' But Steve looked at me and said, 'Think about it. It's *dangerous*! We'll be able to recreate live all the stuff we've recorded on albums with lots of overdubs. And the more I thought about it the more I realised I hadn't been thinking about the bigger picture. And look where we've gone since Adrian came back in! He's such a great songwriter and that alone is a huge plus. We haven't looked back!"

CAN YOU IMAGINE LIFE WITHOUT MAIDEN?

"I've thought about it. When Bruce got sick we all questioned our own mortality and what we would do under different circumstances. Of course that would be the end of the band, because there's no way we'd have carried on without him. We never actually talked about it, because I don't think we needed to. But I don't think there was any way. It was one of those unspoken things. But our brother fought that disease and the Lord said he'd be OK. I'm very happy to say that Bruce is in fine form now, the band's in fine fettle, and there's definitely more to come from Iron Maiden."

Photo: IconicPix/George Bodnar Archive

IRON MAIDEN



JANICK GERS

The most elusive guitarist in **Iron Maiden** is the new boy who's been there 30 years...

Photo: Getty Images/Mitchell Gerber/Corbis/VCG

JANICK GERS, 63, IS one of 'The Three Amigos', the nickname given to Iron Maiden's trio of guitarists; Dave Murray, Adrian Smith and Gers himself. The former White Spirit and Gillan member joined the band in 1990 after co-writing songs with vocalist Bruce Dickinson and playing on his first solo album 'Tattooed Millionaire', and he's been there ever since. Known for his energetic performances on the stage and his elusiveness off it, it's no mean feat to tie Janick down for an interview where he offers a personal look at life inside the Maiden bubble...

JAN, CAN WE STILL CALL YOU THE NEW BOY IN IRON MAIDEN, EVEN THOUGH YOU'VE BEEN IN THE BAND FOR 30 YEARS NOW?

"Ha, I'm the Ronnie Wood of Iron Maiden! To be honest I can't believe it's been that long, because it's gone so fast. It's like having kids. One minute you're carrying them around in your arms and then the next minute they're off doing their own thing. I was actually thinking about the Holy Smokers thing last night [the first gig Janick played with Maiden was a small warm-up show in Milton Keynes, England ahead of the 'No Prayer On The Road' tour in 1990. The band played to a crowd of 400 as The Holy Smokers]. I can still remember setting my amp up at that little gig like it was yesterday."

WAS IT A NO BRAINER TO JOIN MAIDEN WHEN YOU WERE ASKED BACK IN 1990?

"I was working with Bruce and had recorded the guitars on his solo album when they rang me up about the gig. But the thing was, I'd never worked with another guitar player before. I'd only worked with a keyboard player, so to be honest I didn't think I'd fit in with Maiden. Anyway, I went along to rehearsals thinking that it wouldn't be right for me, playing with another guitarist. But when Davey and I started playing 'The Trooper' it was obvious straight away that it worked. It was really good and it was really natural. I was very surprised, but we all got to the end of the song and we were literally shaking. That adrenaline kicks in when you work with certain people and it doesn't with others. You can't manufacture it. It's like being in a football team. Top players get in the dressing room and the temperature goes up. That's called chemistry. That's how it felt with Iron Maiden that day, and as soon as we'd played that song all my doubts about how it would work between Davey and me disappeared."

IT WASN'T LIKE YOU DIDN'T KNOW THE MAIDEN GUYS ALREADY, WAS IT?

"Not at all. I wasn't starstruck or anything, because I already knew the guys a bit. I'd been in Gillan and had done some stuff with [former Marillion vocalist] Fish and Bruce, too. So I wasn't a novice, but I didn't know a lot of Maiden's stuff at that time. I was a bit worried, but it felt good right from the start, so when they asked me if I wanted to join the band I didn't hesitate to say yes."

TALKING OF COMFORTABLE, OR MAYBE UNCOMFORTABLE, HOW DID YOU REACT AFTER NEARLY A DECADE IN THE BAND WHEN IT WAS SUDDENLY MOOTED IN 1999 THAT ADRIAN SMITH MIGHT REJOIN IRON MAIDEN?

"There were a lot of things that went on at that time. Blaze [Bayley, the vocalist who replaced Bruce for two albums in the '90s] came and went, then Bruce came back and it was suggested that Adrian could come back too. Again, I honestly didn't know if it would work. I thought to myself, 'Well I could go', and I was genuinely thinking that maybe I should leave."

WHY DID THAT THOUGHT COME INTO YOUR HEAD?

"I don't know, really. Maybe I was thinking that there was no need for three guitars in Iron Maiden. But Steve came to see me and he said, 'If you go, then we're back to 'Seventh Son Of A Seventh Son', and if Bruce comes back but Adrian *doesn't* come back, then we're at 'Fear Of The Dark'. But if you stay *and* Adrian comes back, then we're going somewhere else, somewhere new.' That at least convinced me to give it a go, so I said fine. But I didn't really know exactly what to expect. I'd always liked Adrian's playing, though. He's very rhythmic, a different kind of player to me, and he has a different feel. But when all three of us guitarists did the first album together, [2000's] 'Brave New World', we didn't sit down and say, 'Right, you do this and I'll do that.' We all played in our different styles and it seemed to work. The album worked out fine."

> "I'D NEVER WORKED WITH ANOTHER GUITAR PLAYER BEFORE. I'D ONLY WORKED WITH A KEYBOARD PLAYER, SO TO BE HONEST I DIDN'T THINK I'D FIT IN WITH MAIDEN."

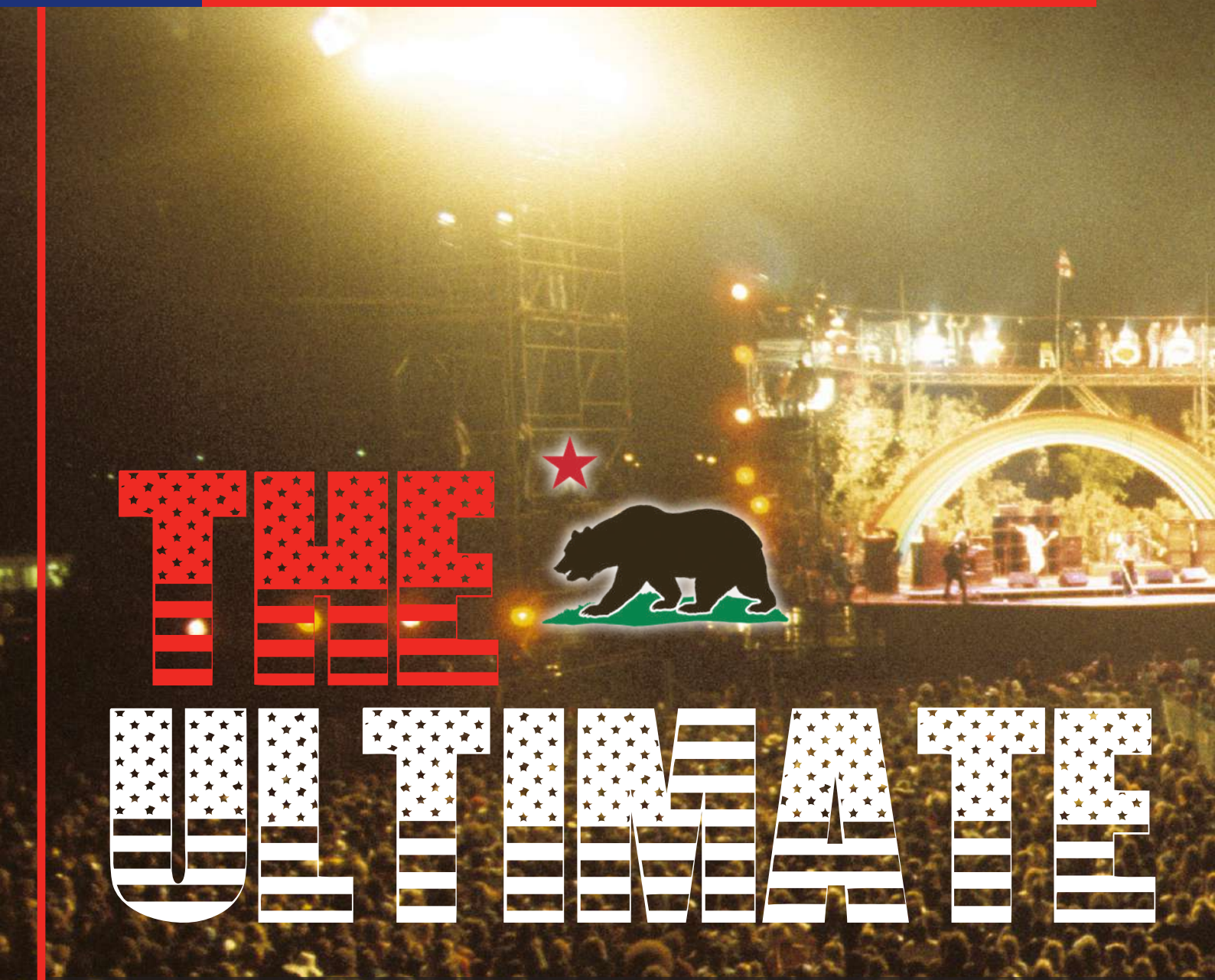
HOW DID YOU SHARE THE WORKLOAD?

"We worked out between us what would be best for each song, so for example you'd end up with Adrian playing with a clean sound, I'd be playing the melody, and Dave would be hitting the really heavy chords. It felt good. There was some great stuff on 'Brave New World'. I think the trick was not to get under each other's feet. You couldn't put an egotistical guitarist in with the three of us – it just wouldn't work out. You have to keep out of the way sometimes, so that everybody can shine. It's a cliché, but it's a tapestry that's designed to make the band sound bigger."

DO YOU EVER HANKER FOR THE DAYS WHEN IT WAS JUST YOU AND DAVEY SHARING GUITAR DUTIES??

"If anything I like it better this way. We're all different onstage and I think we all bring something to the party, but we're all united in working really hard to provide a great show. Playing-wise, Dave and I stay high, while Adrian drops lower. I wouldn't necessarily want to play that grungy stuff, but it's good because Adrian doing that gives us more power underneath. Steve plays a lot more central. He doesn't have a lot of bottom end there, so H gives songs like 'Number Of The Beast' and 'Fear Of The Dark' a good undertow.

"With a Maiden live show it's not about the production and the lights, it's about the band. There are so many groups that go out and expect the audience to love them just because of who they are. I've seen it with my own eyes when I've been in the audience and it's just embarrassing. The people in the crowd have paid their money. You have to go out and give them a show, prove to them that you mean it and that you're not just there to lap up all the adulation. It's about grasping the situation and making people enjoy it, giving them their money's worth. We all have our characters and we're all different, from Nicko at the back right through to Bruce at the front. And that really helps. The live show would be exciting to watch even if it was just the six of us without the stage show, because we have chemistry between us and we have power."



THE ULTIMATE

ALLEN PAMPLIN WAS 15 years old and living in Northridge, a suburb of Los Angeles in the San Fernando Valley. It was a Friday afternoon in April 1974. "I was a real pot-head in those days, and a slight recluse in my black light room," he recalls. "I listened to old beat-up eight-track tapes of Sabbath and Floyd while I painted with fluorescent enamel paints on my bedroom walls..." Allen was walking home from school with his girlfriend when he saw his older brother Karey loading up the family station wagon. "Get in," Karey said. "We're going to the California Jam..."

Until that moment Allen Pamplin hadn't even known of the Jam's existence. But the news that Black Sabbath were playing was good enough for him. As they got ready to leave, a friend of his brother's made reference to people being killed at rock festivals: "I remember thinking, 'why the f*ck did I agree to go to this show?' But then I thought of seeing Sabbath... maybe that was worth getting killed for..."

The hallowed rock festival wasn't in a good place in 1974. 1969's Woodstock event in the town of Bethel, New York, had been a logistical disaster, the flower-power dream played out against food shortages, poor sanitation, day-long traffic jams and a state of emergency declared by the local council. The Isle of Wight Festival of 1970 attracted so many fans, and resulted in so much chaos, that an act of the British Parliament was subsequently passed to stop gatherings of more than 5,000 people on the island. Most terrible of all was California's Altamont gathering of December '69 because of the violence and darkness that led to the stabbing and death of Meredith Hunter, and the accidental deaths of three other fans – two in a hit-and-run and another who drowned.

GIVEN WHAT had been going on, then, when Don Branker – a promoter who worked with the ABC television network on their *In Concert* series – was asked to consider putting on a festival that could be filmed and then edited down into a series of programmes for future broadcast, he immediately understood that great care was needed. Partnering with music and television business veterans Lenny Stogel and Sandy Feldman – men experienced in staging big shows like Branker – they began to search for a site that could accommodate a happening on the scale of Woodstock or Altamont, but

JAM!

1974's **California Jam** music festival, headlined by Deep Purple and ELP, proved to be the perfect antidote to the chaos of Woodstock and the darkness of Altamont. *Jon Hotten* investigates what it was that made the event so special, from the viewpoint of both the fans who were there and the people who made it happen...

one that could also overcome the problems inherent in those events.

The Ontario Motor Speedway, located 35 miles east of Los Angeles near the city of Ontario, had opened in August 1970 as 'the Indianapolis of the West', a venue fit for Grand Prix and Indy 500 car racing. As such it was also set up to accommodate large crowds, although any music concert would require everything from the stage to the power to be trucked onto the site.

Branker, Feldman and Stogel went out to the Speedway and thought it would work, although such were the echoes of Altamont – which was also primarily a motorsport venue – that they were somewhat economical with the truth when they pitched to Ontario authorities for the various permits required. Branker deliberately didn't use the word 'festival', instead touting his proposed event as a 'music show' that would feature family-friendly groups like The Osmonds.

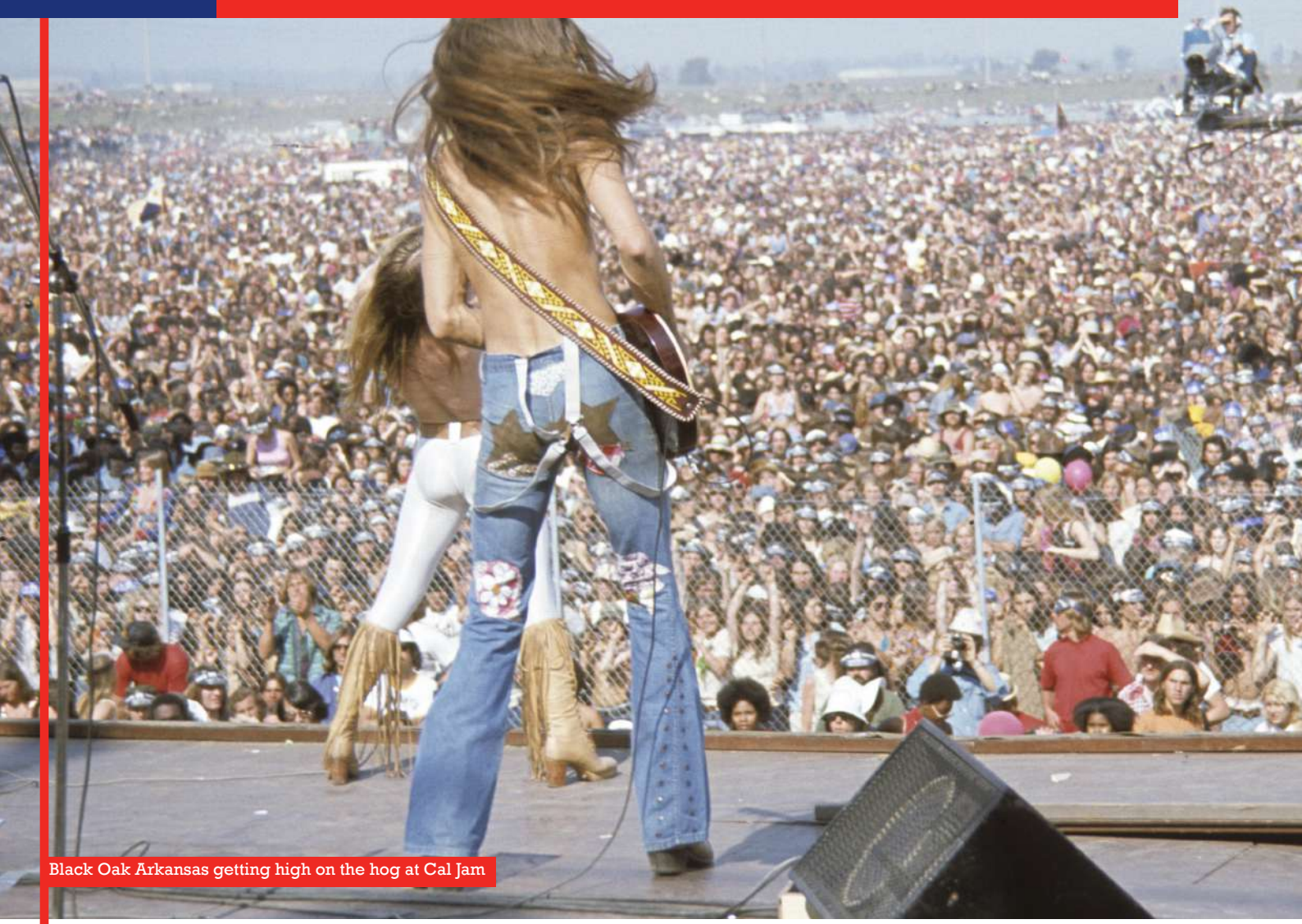
As Branker revealed many years later in a radio interview with DJ Mike Stark about the event: "We then went back three weeks later and told them, 'Well, we couldn't get those acts, but we have got Deep Purple; Black Sabbath; and Emerson, Lake & Palmer...' Luckily the police chief out there had never heard of them."

Branker set to work on the logistics, which required him to map out a site plan within the interior of the racetrack, fence it off, bring in power, water and sanitation, and come up with a slick, three-unit stage design that incorporated a series of train tracks to enable fast turnaround times between bands. An LA-based business that booked talent called Pacific Promotions was recruited to assemble the bill. Ambitiously, they shot for two British bands that were both at a commercial peak in the early months of 1974, Deep Purple and ELP.

DEEP PURPLE had been through a tempestuous personnel split the previous summer. Overworked and with personal relationships overheating, vocalist Ian Gillan had left the band after a tour of Japan, burned out by a working schedule that had seen Purple release four records in three years and gig incessantly to promote them. In 1972 alone they toured America four times, as well as the UK and Europe and then Japan, where they'd recorded 'Made In Japan', a live album that had further fuelled their success. By the time 'Who Do We Think We Are' – Gillan and bassist Roger Glover's final

Photo: Getty Images/Walt Disney Television

INSIDE STORY



Black Oak Arkansas getting high on the hog at Cal Jam

studio album with the band – had taken off, combined sales made them the biggest act in the US for 1973. But as Gillan pointed out, every member of the group had been ill, mostly through fatigue. "We should have stopped," he said. "I think if we did, the original Deep Purple would have still been around..."

After Gillan walked, the mercurial Ritchie Blackmore insisted on Glover's departure, too – or at least Glover had resigned his position believing that to be the case. The pair were replaced by bassist and vocalist Glenn Hughes, a hardened performer with Trapeze, and singer David Coverdale who, with bewildering speed, found himself going from shop assistant at a boutique in Redcar to making a record with the world's biggest band.

When Deep Purple's management called Blackmore about a booking for a festival in California, he initially turned the show down. "I said, 'No thanks, I'm not interested in any more festivals. They're a nightmare and they always will be. There's always a complete catastrophe backstage, nothing ever goes right, you're either on late or early, the billing always goes wrong...'"

After some to-ing and fro-ing where his managers tried to convince him that the rest of the band had already agreed to the show, only for Blackmore to phone them individually and discover they hadn't, the guitarist nevertheless finally relented, just so long as "we could do it under our conditions." The main stipulation was that Purple would go on "at dusk... the first band to use lights," as Blackmore felt that the lights had "a psychological impact" on the crowd.

> "I REMEMBER THINKING, 'WHY THE F*CK DID I AGREE TO GO TO THIS SHOW...?' BUT THEN I THOUGHT OF SEEING SABBATH... MAYBE THAT WAS WORTH GETTING KILLED FOR..."
> **ROCK FAN ALLEN PAMPLIN**

WITH THE 'dusk' clause apparently agreed, Purple accepted what was effectively a co-headline slot with Emerson, Lake & Palmer, who would be touring in support of 'Brain Salad Surgery,' an album they'd released at the end of 1973. Like Purple, ELP were approaching their commercial peak, their blend of symphonic prog rock, over-the-top showmanship, and stadium-pleasing theatrics powering huge record sales on both sides of the Atlantic. Purple and ELP were booked on the same terms, a 90-minute set for a flat fee of $75,000 plus 35 per cent of the first $750,000 of gate receipts – effectively another $265,000.

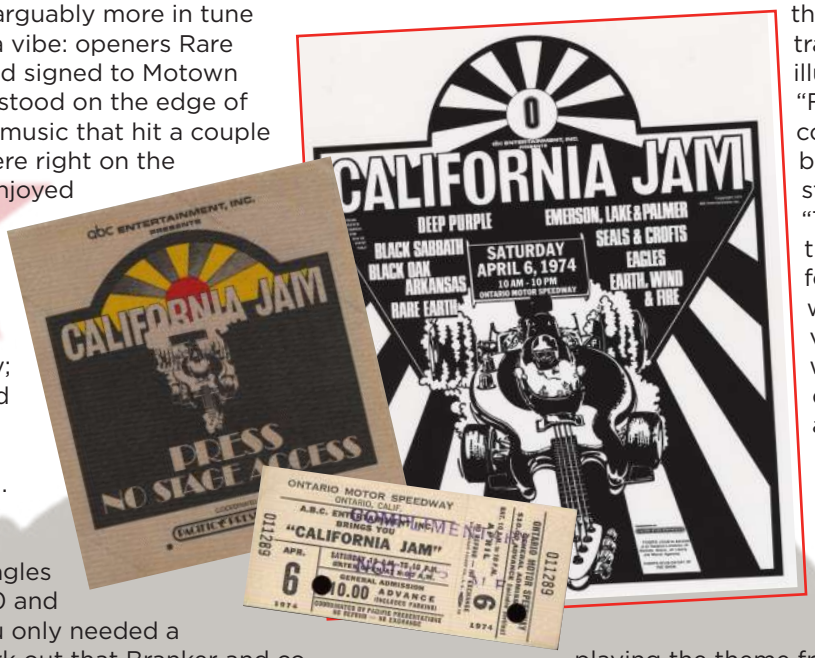
Black Sabbath, who were operating a notch below Purple and ELP commercially, were nevertheless also at something of an artistic peak, putting out records that were foundations of heavy metal in a period of

remarkable fecundity. From February of 1970 until December 1973, they'd made and released 'Black Sabbath', 'Paranoid', 'Master Of Reality', 'Vol. 4' and 'Sabbath Bloody Sabbath', the latter pair of dark masterpieces fuelled by booze and coke as well as a restless creative urge. The Birmingham band was booked for a 60-minute performance at $50,000, plus 10 per cent of the first $750,000 of gate receipts.

Deep Purple's Ritchie Blackmore making full use of the 'dusk' clause in his contract

While Sabbath, Purple and ELP offered a performing base that was varying shades of hard rock, the rest of the bill was more eclectic, and arguably more in tune with the Southern California vibe: openers Rare Earth were a white soul band signed to Motown records; Earth, Wind & Fire stood on the edge of the boom in soul and disco music that hit a couple of years later; the Eagles were right on the cusp of greatness, having enjoyed some Top 20 success, but waiting for their first number one; Seals & Crofts had had a huge hit in 1972 with 'Summer Breeze', a version that still gets airplay; and Black Oak Arkansas had racked up successive gold records in 'Raunch 'N' Roll Live' and 'High On The Hog'.

All five acts were paid flat fees – Rare Earth and Earth, Wind & Fire $10,000, the Eagles $12,500, Black Oak $20,000 and Seals & Crofts $50,000. You only needed a basic grasp of maths to work out that Branker and co. had to sell a substantial amount of tickets just to break even. The day of the gig was set for Saturday 6 April 1974, admission was set at $10 in advance, $15 on the day. A slick poster featuring a race car in the shape of a guitar with the neck poking out of the front went up, newspaper ads were taken and everyone waited to see what would happen.



ALLEN PAMPLIN and his brother arrived at the Speedway just before midnight on the Friday night. "Both the east and west parking lots turned into a huge clusterf*ck," he recalls. "But you could still get a parking spot before midnight, even though there were thousands of cars and bodies already there. I would estimate about a quarter of the entire audience was there in the speedway parking lots the night before. Well, I wouldn't say we were exactly an audience at that point. We appeared to be more like a mob of lost travellers that had migrated to this remote party right in the middle of nowhere.

"I started to walk around the parking lot to check the place out. It looked more like a party with drugs everywhere. You could buy drugs from almost anyone there and use it right out in the open. Some vehicles had 'drugs for sale' signs posted on them. Imagine the biggest street party that you'd ever been to in the '70s, and then multiply that by at least a thousand."

The gates to the arena itself opened at one in the morning and through the darkness the parking lots began to empty as fans were drawn into the tunnels that ran under the track and toward the illuminated infield. "From far away I could see a rainbow backdrop on the stage," says Pamplin. "That was the first thing I remember focusing on as I walked across the vast open field. I was amazed, in a dream-like state in all that space."

He worked his way through the crowd, settling about 20 rows from the front. At five am the sound system began playing the theme from director Stanley Kubrick's legendary film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The quality of sound at the show proved to be one of Don Branker's triumphs, created by a 54,000 watt PA that was effectively the touring systems of Black Sabbath, Deep Purple, Black Oak Arkansas, Earth, Wind and Fire, and Rare Earth put together. It was perhaps the loudest, certainly the purest sound system assembled up to that point. As the sun came up, Allen Pamplin, Don Branker and everyone else on site realised exactly what they were a part of. The crowd was already huge, and when the first band went on ahead of time at 9.45 am, it continued to grow. Although the show was MC-ed by the DJ Don Imus, it was Branker who took on the role of stage announcer and general facilitator, keeping the ever-growing throng calm and happy.

"Don Branker played a huge role in helping the audience maintain their cool throughout the show," says Pamplin. "He had a way of making you feel he cared about you when he spoke to you. No running order

Photos: Getty Images/Walt Disney Television; Getty Images/Paul Natkin

INSIDE STORY

Ozzy and his people. "It was so f*cking loud"

A Cal Jam festivalgoer gets down and gets with it. Note the Black Oak Arkansas visor.

was announced. We all knew who was expected to play on the day from the newspaper ads and promo posters. But no one in the audience knew in what order the bands would come on stage, except for the headliners at the end of the show.

"When you're that close to the stage with 300,000 people behind you it gets pretty concentrated. There was a fenced enclosure area in front of the stage for reporters and artist guests. It afforded them room for lying down on blankets, going to the bathroom with ease, getting food and dancing. I was on the other side of that fence standing 20 yards from the stage... It was standing room only, and we were packed like a can of sardines..."

THE BANDS were helicoptered in over the crowds. The Eagles showed up with Jackson Browne in tow as stand-in guitarist while Don Felder missed the gig to be with his wife, who was about to give birth. Before Black Oak Arkansas came on, a helicopter showered the field with BOA sun visors, and the band flew in with porn star Linda Lovelace aboard their aircraft. They capped their set with the first, but not last, destruction of instruments that day. Stanley Knight and Harvey Jett smashed their guitars together and threw the wreckage off the stage.

The show ran ahead of schedule all the way until Black Sabbath came on in the late afternoon. The weather held too, unseasonably warm for an April day. Unlike the rest of the bill and the other two headliners, Sabbath were coming into the show cold, having not played live for five or six weeks, and not having rehearsed.

"It was strange," Tony Iommi recalled in his autobiography, *Iron Man*. "One moment you're home in bed and the next you're flying to a gig. We hadn't played for five or six weeks, we didn't rehearse; it was a one-off, so it was a bit hairy. We all get stage fright on certain occasions. It depends. The first gig of a tour usually makes you go: 'Ooooh!' The second gig is much more relaxed. And that's the one where everything goes wrong.

"But the California Jam, what with the weird lead up to it and hundreds of thousands of people there, was nerve-wracking. And it was televised, which made it even more terrifying. But stage fright never lasts. We got on stage, played, and it was okay. The gig was good. It was just the shock of it all. But I think it worked."

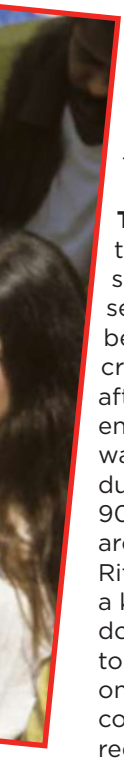
> "SABBATH HAD NO LIGHTS, THEY HAD NO PYRO, THEY HAD NO ANYTHING AND I PROBABLY WATCHED THE GREATEST ROCK'N'ROLL SHOW I'D SEEN IN MY LIFE. OZZY JUST TOOK THE QUARTER-MILLION PEOPLE ON A TRIP."
> **PROMOTER DON BRANKER**

In fact, it more than worked. As Don Branker said: "Sabbath had no lights, they had no pyro, they had no anything and I probably watched the greatest rock'n'roll show I'd seen in my life. Ozzy just took the quarter-million people on a trip. Still to this day I get 20 to 30 emails talking about that performance..."

"The only time it got a little dangerous was when Black Sabbath's stage rolled out on the tracks with all their gear on it," says Pamplin. "As the crowd pushed forward it created a kind of kinetic force from the rear toward the front. By the time this energy arrived it hit those of us upfront like a runaway truck which caused us to slam into the poor b*stards in front of us. We were forced forward and packed so tight that the guest enclosure fence started to lean toward the stage, which prompted the security to physically hold the fence up to prevent it from collapsing.

"Seeing Black Sabbath for the first time coming out on stage under that rainbow was electric for me. To hear Tony Iommi's guitar through a 54,000-watt sound system upfront near the stage was this teenager's wet dream. It was so f*cking loud you could scream at the person next to you and be unheard. That was my cue to spark up a doobie.

"During 'Children Of The Grave' Ozzy threw his purple tasselled shirt out into the audience. It was coming in my direction and fell 15 feet in front of me. The fans who got hold of it tore it to shreds. Then Ozzy got everyone to put their arms in the air. You didn't care



how uncomfortable you were in the crowd, because we were all touching the sky that day."

THE REAL drama, though, was just getting started. After a day of seamless transitions between bands, the crowd waited for an hour after Sabbath's set had ended, wondering what was next. The California dusk was at least another 90 minutes away. At around half past six Ritchie Blackmore heard a knock on his caravan door with an instruction to get ready to go onstage. Blackmore, considering the 'dusk' request to be watertight, simply locked the door and refused to come out. "[I was] having a few drinks and playing the guitar..." he said. "But it's the principle."

A sort of Mexican standoff ensued. An ABC producer, Jorn Winther, was charged with trying to coax Blackmore out of the trailer and onto the stage. When all of his attempts failed he said he was going to announce to the crowd that Deep Purple had cancelled. When he got side-stage, he walked past Don Branker, who said simply, "Good luck..." Jorn looked out at sea of people in front of him and knew he couldn't do it. As he glanced behind him, to his eternal relief, he saw the band finally marching out.

"It was a beautiful, clear, twilight sky, adorned with an equally beautifully lit rainbow, with the full force of multi-coloured stage lights," recalls Pamplin. "Exciting and surreal in many ways. 'Burn' and 'Mistreated' were my personal highlights of the Purple set."

Blackmore, never a man to be upstaged, had a big finish planned. He'd instructed a roadie to cover his amplifier with petrol so that when he smashed his guitar at the end of the set he could throw it into the amp and the whole thing would light up. But while he was playing, Blackmore's irascibility about the show was again heightened by the proximity of ABC cameraman Dave Hilmer. On several occasions Blackmore grabbed the camera when he felt it got too close.

"I was never told, or warned about Ritchie," Hilmer recalls. "I called him an asshole on stage because he grabbed my camera a couple of times and would shake it as he smiled down my lens at me."

By the time of the encore, 'Space Truckin'', Blackmore was more than ready to cause mayhem. He broke his guitar and hurled it into the amplifier, thinking it would catch fire and provide a spectacular finale. "Of course it did more than that..." he later recalled. "It made a hole in the stage. Paicey's glasses got blown off, so he couldn't see anything. It made some cameraman temporarily deaf. But it looked great..."

"The two explosions got amplified through the PA system," Pamplin says. "I could feel it go through me, emanating from the speaker towers. It was rock'n'roll pandemonium..."

One of Purple's management team was standing in the ABC recording truck at the time, being berated for the band's failure to go onstage. He witnessed the explosion and had to stand in front of the monitor so that the ABC directors couldn't see what was happening. As Blackmore confessed many years later, "The idea was to upstage ELP... And we did. It worked."

Purple left the site by helicopter immediately after their set, apparently with the police keen to speak to them. Don Branker explained: "I had to deal with the fire marshal afterwards and convince him that I didn't know about the explosion. Also, Ritchie put his guitar through one of the ABC cameras and had to pay for that. To be honest with you, it goes back to the early club days in England when these bands were coming up. You know, it's a fight for who's going to do better, who's going to do this and that..."

David Coverdale fronts Purple at the California Jam

PURPLE'S MAIN STIPULATION WAS THAT THEY WOULD GO ON 'AT DUSK... THE FIRST BAND TO USE LIGHTS,' AS BLACKMORE FELT THAT THE LIGHTS HAD 'A PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT' ON THE CROWD.

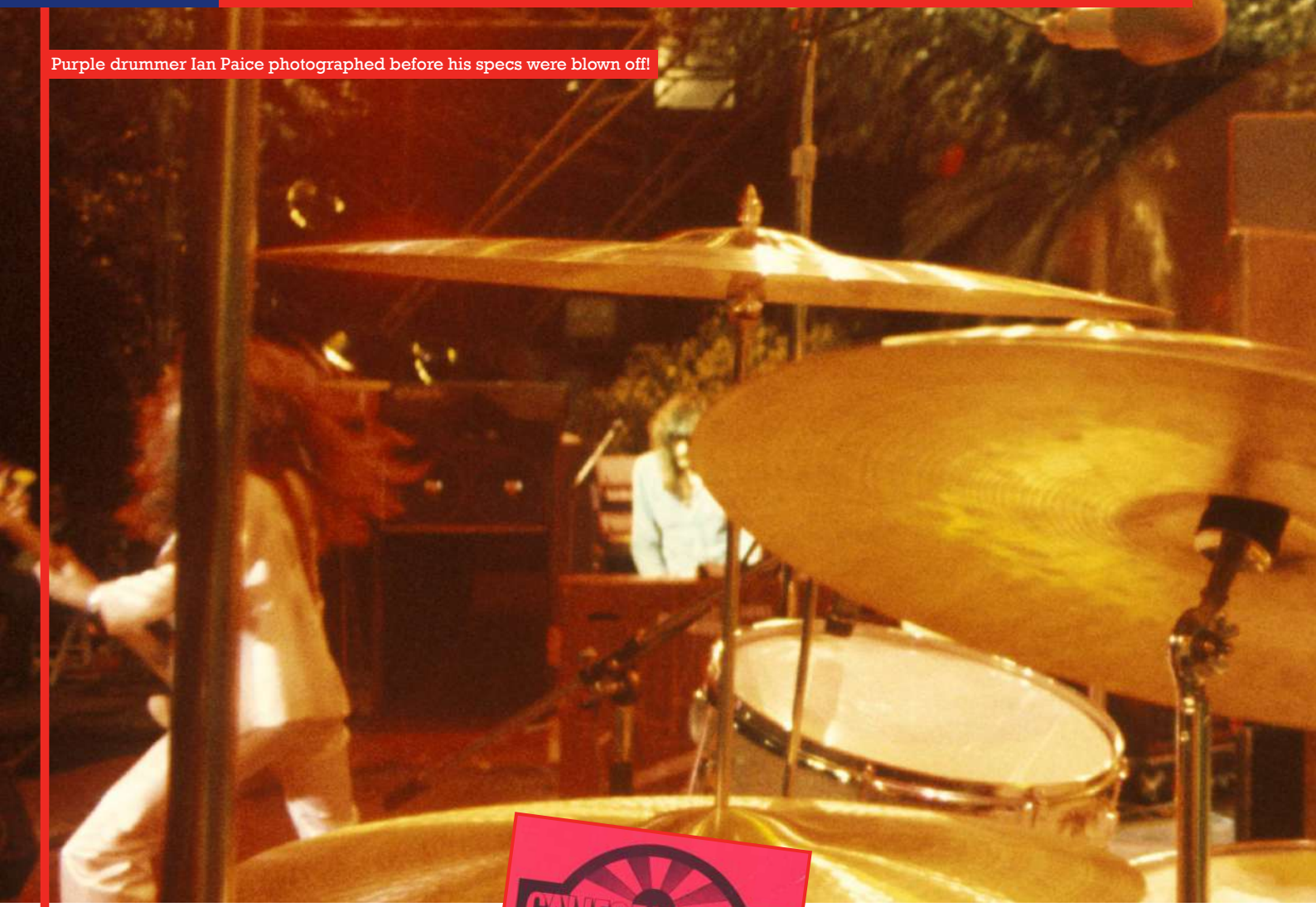
DESPITE SOME anger at not beginning their set until after midnight, ELP were too experienced to be fazed. Their staging was immaculate and really exciting, Carl Palmer's drum kit rotating, and, at one point, Keith Emerson's grand piano spinning end over end 50 feet in the air.

"But it was the more subtle parts that touched me the most," says Allen Pamplin. "My favourite bit was Keith Emerson's piano strumming with a plectrum on 'Take A Pebble'. All three parts of 'Take A Pebble' were absolutely mesmerising..."

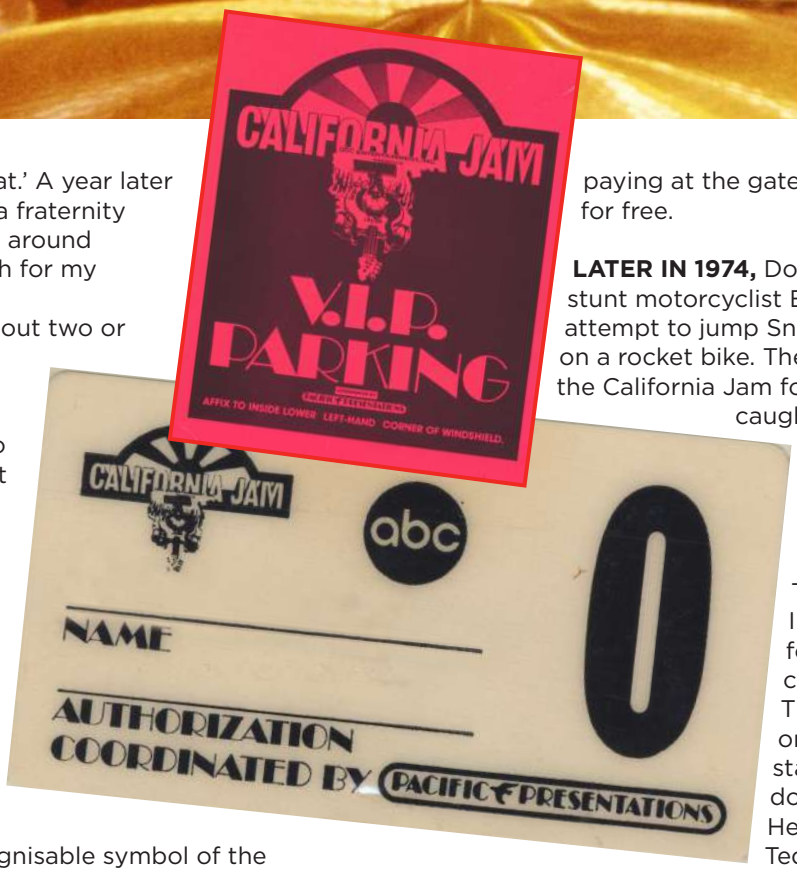
The huge crowds hung on until the very last. "When it was all over it took about 30 minutes to get out of the infield," says Pamplin. "I remember almost tripping over a shirtless guy rolling around in his own vomit. He was biting on his shirt, pulling it down with both hands as he rocked from side to side. I thought to myself,

Photos: Getty Images/Walt Disney Television

INSIDE STORY



Purple drummer Ian Paice photographed before his specs were blown off!



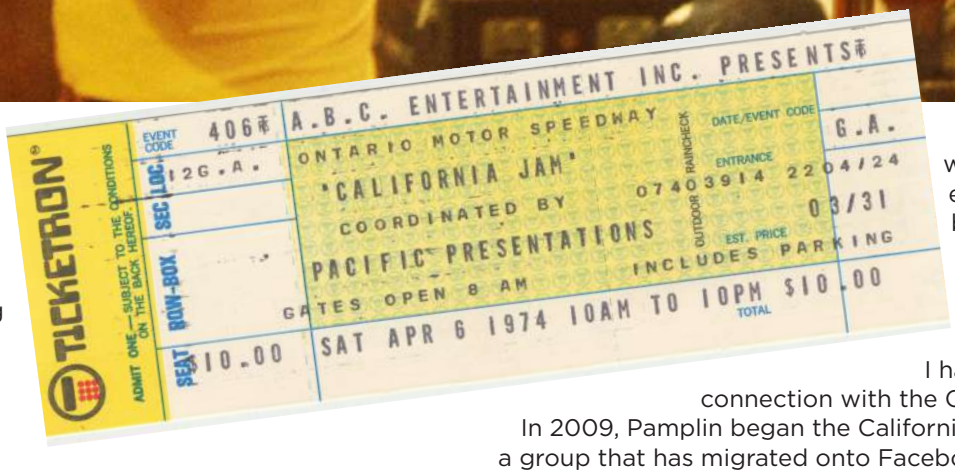
'F*ck, I'll never get like that.' A year later I was in the back yard of a fraternity house in Colorado, rolling around in my own vomit. So much for my good intentions!

"I'm guessing it took about two or three hours to get home, but I slept the whole way. I'd been up for the last 41 hours – Friday morning to Sunday morning. Greatest two days of my life."

But it wasn't just Allen Pamplin who thought so. California Jam had succeeded in keeping all of the drama on the stage where it should be. For such a giant event it ran pretty smoothly, and simple gestures like the great wooden rainbow that adorned the stage became an instantly recognisable symbol of the show. By the time the *In Concert* series of programmes were broadcast on television some months later, the attendance had been confirmed as above 175,000 in advance ticket sales, plus almost the same amount again paying at the gate or finding their way in for free.

LATER IN 1974, Don Branker promoted stunt motorcyclist Evel Knievel's doomed attempt to jump Snake River Canyon on a rocket bike. Then, after reviving the California Jam four years later, he caught onto the craze for skateboarding and began promoting that too. His love for rock'n'roll had waned somewhat by that point.

The gap between Jam I and Jam II was only four years, but much had changed in that time. The acts that appeared on 18 March 1978 were staples of the newly dominant rock radio: Heart, Foreigner, Santana, Ted Nugent, Aerosmith. Production had become more slick and the event less chaotic, setting out a path towards the run-like-clockwork behemoths of the modern era.



It was Aerosmith who provided the final nail in the coffin for Branker. At some point during the second Jam, Branker was told that Steven Tyler refused to go on stage because Branker's assistant forgot to remove all the black jellybeans from the two pounds of sweets provided on their rider. A row ensued, with Branker threatening to do what Jorn Winther had almost done with Deep Purple and tell the crowd that the show was off. Branker said later: "This [incident with Tyler] sickened me so much I stopped producing rock concerts."

There was also a sad coda to the second Jam. Branker's co-promoter Lenny Stogel died in an American Airlines crash in 1979. In a macabre twist on an awful tragedy, Stogel had previously lost both of his parents in another American Airlines crash, back in 1962. It felt like a sign, and the Ontario Motor Speedway itself was demolished in 1981.

"It took some time to truly absorb it all," Allen Pamplin says. "A lot was going on musically in 1974, but that event never left my mind. I've carried it with me my whole life. I guess events in life become historic to the degree that you make a connection with them. And I have an emotional connection with the California Jam."

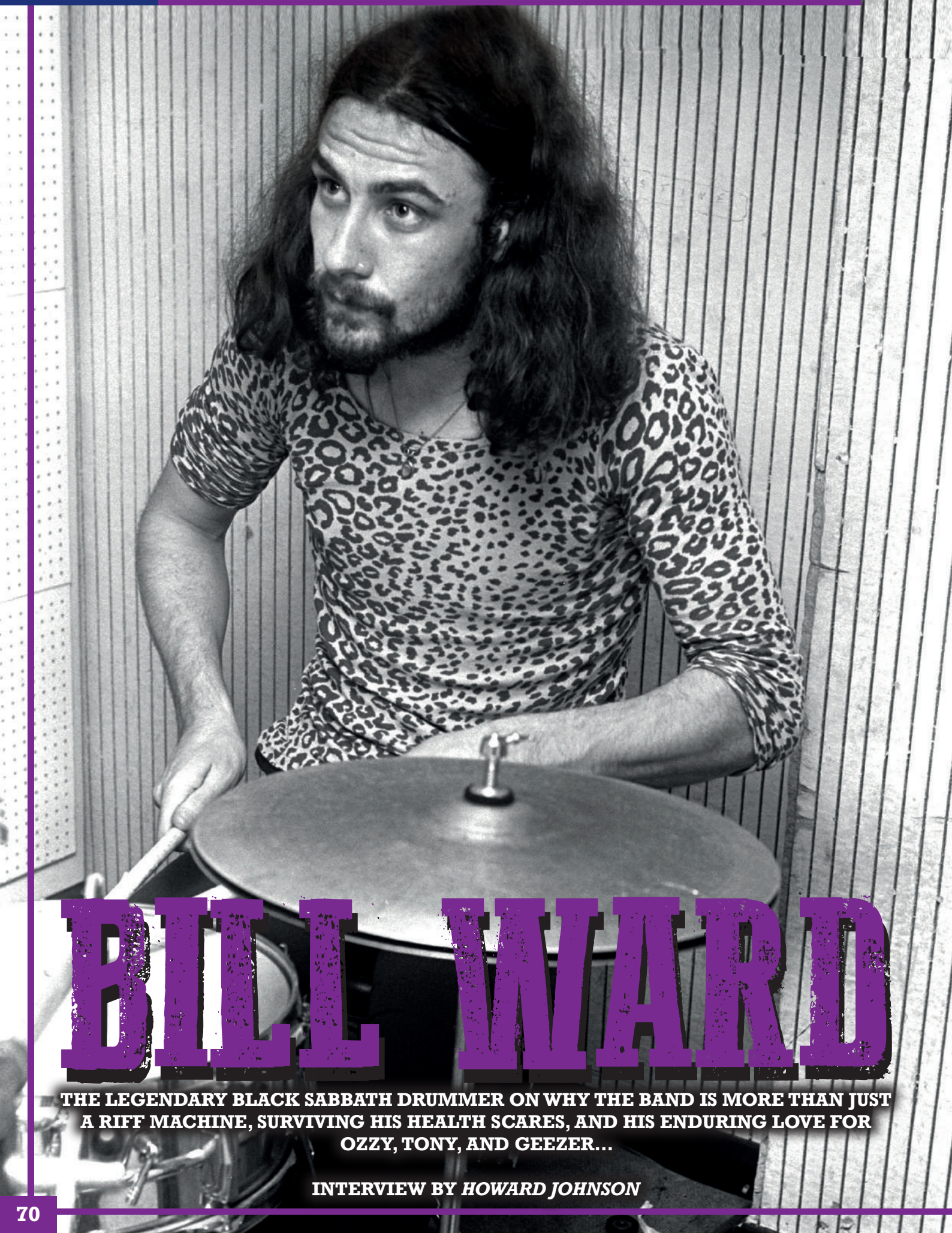
In 2009, Pamplin began the California Jam Fan Club, a group that has migrated onto Facebook and serves as a time capsule repository of memories from attendees – "we spiked oranges with vodka and smoked a lot of weed," runs one of many comments typical of the site – together with photographs and footage that continue to emerge. Pamplin has amassed an extraordinary collection of memorabilia, which has served to preserve the festival in a way that perhaps only Woodstock and the Isle of Wight can match.

"I believe when a new generation views videos they're blown away by the scale of the event, and the raw performances of each act," he says. "Ozzy wasn't kidding when he said during an interview backstage with Lynn Goldsmith, 'This is the way they all should be...'"

You can find The California Jam Fan Club on Facebook, and can contact them by email at californiajam74@live.com

Photo: Getty Images/Tin Costello/Redferns

RAPID FIRE RECALL



BILL WARD

THE LEGENDARY BLACK SABBATH DRUMMER ON WHY THE BAND IS MORE THAN JUST A RIFF MACHINE, SURVIVING HIS HEALTH SCARES, AND HIS ENDURING LOVE FOR OZZY, TONY, AND GEEZER...

INTERVIEW BY *HOWARD JOHNSON*

YOUR PASSION FOR DRUMMING

"I was always interested in the sound of drums from a very young age, but it was really when I was about nine and first heard Buddy Holly's 'Peggy Sue' that I decided I wanted a piece of the action! I *needed* to learn the drumming on that song. I had cardboard boxes for drums and went down the local hardware store to buy four inches of cane for drumsticks. I'd put 'Peggy Sue' on and play along. I remember it had a lot of tom tom work, and when they went into that famous two-one beat, well I learnt that too. By the time I was 10 years old I'd started to get a bit serious about drumming and wanted to see how far I could go with it. The first Beatles record came out in October of 1962, when I was 14, and what I loved about it was the fact that although Ringo was a great drummer, he somehow made drumming reachable. The Beatles showed everyone where I was growing up in Birmingham that you could be in a band, that you could go out and have fun – and that there might even be some girls involved!"

MEETING TONY IOMMI

"That was in 1966. I was drumming in a band called The Rest and Tony had already been in various Birmingham bands. We'd bump into each other watching local groups. In The Rest we decided we could do with another guitarist, so we went to Tony's house at Park Lane in Aston to ask if he wanted to join, and he was very quick to say yes. We organised a little audition and suggested playing a Chuck Berry song, because we did some of his numbers in our set at the time. Tony got his Strat out and absolutely nailed it. We were all looking at each other, going 'Holy crap!' I'd never been that close to someone who could play that well – and Tony was still so young then. He really kicked things up a notch or two. What was funny was that after totally killing it, Tony said, 'Is that OK?' quite apologetically. We all said 'Oh yes, that'll do.'"

MYTHOLOGY

"Tony got offered a job by a band called Mythology up in Carlisle in the north of England. He'd heard the original drummer was leaving so he told me, 'If we do it right we can get you in there.' And that's what happened. We all lived in the same house in Carlisle and it was fantastic. It was a big adventure and while there were a lot of bands up there, again there was a lot of work. We had an agent called Monica Lynton and she'd get us gigs as far away as Dumfries in Scotland. We played all over Cumbria and the border towns, and we loved it. The music was starting to get a little bit more adventurous. We were covering the Grateful Dead's 'Morning Dew', which was the big number at the time, but we'd also do these blues things, with Tony stretching out his lead work. And we were playing a few of our own things too. The band got tight and we got to meet some interesting people, like the guys from Spooky Tooth, who were originally called Art. The bass player in Humble Pie, Greg Ridley, was from Carlisle, so we knew him too."

MEETING GEEZER BUTLER

"Mythology fizzled out when we all got busted for cannabis, which was a pretty big thing back in those days. We went up against the judge in Carlisle and I think we all got a two year suspended sentence and a 10 or 15 pound fine each, which was a lot of money. I don't think that helped our work prospects much, because promoters were a bit wary of that kind of thing. So the bubble kind of burst. Tony and I went back to Birmingham and ended up hanging out at Tony's house in Park Lane. Geezer would get off the bus and walk past the house almost every day. Tony and I would look at him and go, 'What the f*ck?' because Geezer was a very *unusual* looking person. He'd be wearing these lime green trousers that were tight around the ass and would then flare out at the bottom. He wore flowery shirts, too, and to me he looked like a real oddball. I used to think he was f*ckin' nuts! It turned out that Geezer was in a band called The Rare Breed and Tony and I would go and watch him play. He was insane! Geezer was playing guitar at that point – he'd never played bass in his life – and I loved to watch him because of the way he moved. He was everywhere, acting really crazy. So somewhere along the line me, Tony and Geezer ended up together, I'm not quite sure how."

FINDING OZZY

"The three of us decided to get a singer and we answered an advert in a music shop window that said, 'Ozzy Zig needs gig. Has own PA.' Ozzy did have his own PA, actually, a couple of 12-inch speakers. It was a big deal if you had your own PA back then, so it didn't matter that he wasn't worth a crap. He had a PA! When I first met Ozzy there was something about him that really connected with me. I felt like I could have talked to him for hours – and often I did. He was a skinhead at the time, but that was cool. We organised a rehearsal and I was absolutely blown away by Ozzy's natural blues voice. I think it can get lost inside all of the gloss and the triple tracks and the tricks we have today, but Ozzy's voice is absolutely pure soul and blues, with perfect tonality. His core singing is fantastic. I listened to him and went, 'Oh my God!' He was good. We didn't think about anything too much. We just got on with it, and the first song we wrote was 'Wicked World'."

"WHEN I FIRST MET OZZY THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT HIM THAT REALLY CONNECTED WITH ME. I FELT LIKE I COULD HAVE TALKED TO HIM FOR HOURS – AND OFTEN I DID. HE WAS A SKINHEAD AT THE TIME, BUT THAT WAS COOL. WE ORGANISED A REHEARSAL AND I WAS ABSOLUTELY BLOWN AWAY BY OZZY'S NATURAL BLUES VOICE."

BECOMING BLACK SABBATH

"At first we called ourselves The Polka Tulk Blues Band. We had another guitarist and a sax player to start with, but the line-up slimmed down to just the four of us and we changed the band name to Earth. We got some opportunities to play in Germany and around that time we found out that there was another group called Earth, which was getting confusing. On the ferry back from Germany one time Geezer said, 'Let's call it Black Sabbath.' We'd already written the song 'Black Sabbath', and because Geezer had noticed people enjoyed spending money on horror films it seemed like a sensible thing to do."

Photo: Getty Images/Chris Walter/WireImage

RAPID FIRE RECALL

DEVELOPING A SOUND

"I didn't understand it, but I knew that whatever we were doing was really, really good. We weren't smart enough to plan it, to say 'let's be like this'. But we all loved classical music, darker music and the blues. So we had our common areas. We'd show up and carve things out. It felt like *carving* to me. We played together every single day, so we became very intuitive. All the early stuff came out of jams. We used to jam all the time and eventually everything became natural. The only thing we didn't know was what the melody was going to be. Bizarrely I never really listened to Geezer. I played wherever I needed to go. My hi-hat is my lead instrument and my hi-hat always followed Tony. I always figured Geezer knew what the f*ck he was doing. When I went wide he would always fill in. When he went wide I always filled in. If he had a lot of bass to do, then I would go simple and allow that. What I tried to do when I played with those guys was to consider who they were and what was in their hearts, to find places where I could play things to support them when they needed it. That's what I'm always looking for as a drummer. I'm looking for sweet spots, places that will bring integrity. That's what you're supposed to do. You have to be honourable to the other players and you have to ebb and flow with them. Play *together*. Anything else seems inconsiderate to me."

The classic Sabs line-up L-R: Tony Iommi (guitar), Ozzy Osbourne (vocals), Bill Ward (drums) Geezer Butler (bass)

"I'M REALLY GLAD WE WERE BOLD ENOUGH TO SPREAD OUR WINGS. I'M SO PROUD THAT WE ALLOWED OURSELVES TO GO INTO OTHER AREAS THAT HAD BEEN WITH US SINCE WE WERE KIDS, LIKE JAZZ AND BLUES. WE ALLOWED SUBTLETIES TO COME OUT, RATHER THAN CONSTANTLY BEING THIS BIG, DOMINATING THING."

RECORDING THE DEBUT 'BLACK SABBATH' ALBUM IN TWO DAYS

"That seemed normal back then. The band was really good, tight, and tough like leather because we'd spent a lot of time working together. We already had a lot of road in us. We were tough, we were intuitive and we had each other's backs. So we went in and nailed it, bam! It was so f*cking exciting that someone had given us two days in a recording studio. It was the best thing ever, the most wonderful thing that could happen to anybody. I can't even describe it now! It was murder as well, though. I had to wear earphones, put things on my bass drum and tape on my cymbals to help get the sound, and I hated all that. Plus I realised that it was live tracking, so if I f*cked up then we'd have to do the whole thing all over again. But we'd already played those songs so many times that we had it down. And we went into the studio with the idea of it being a live recording, so it was alright. We didn't expect the success we had. We just hoped something good might come from it. I'm in love with that first record. It's really well done and it's one of my favourites. The vulnerability, naivety and ferocity of it... It's amazing."

INSTANT SUCCESS

"In August of 1970 we had a hit single with 'Paranoid', which got to number four. Suddenly we found ourselves having to hide in the backs of limos with people screaming for us. It was like The Beatles and we thought, 'Wow! It's happening to us as well.' It was really... weird. My ego got bitten and it was then that I learnt all kinds of bad habits. My pretensions went full throttle. I floated off into that world of 'I'm really special', got really big headed. I tried to play as humbly as I could, but behind the scenes some of the things I was enjoying were not necessarily down to earth. Fortunately that only lasted a year. Once the initial pop crowd began to leave us and the people who really wanted to hear our music were left, all of that settled down and we could become normal people again. But for a while having that kind of success... I'm not sure if it was nice. I know that it brought out some character defects in me that I would sooner have not seen."

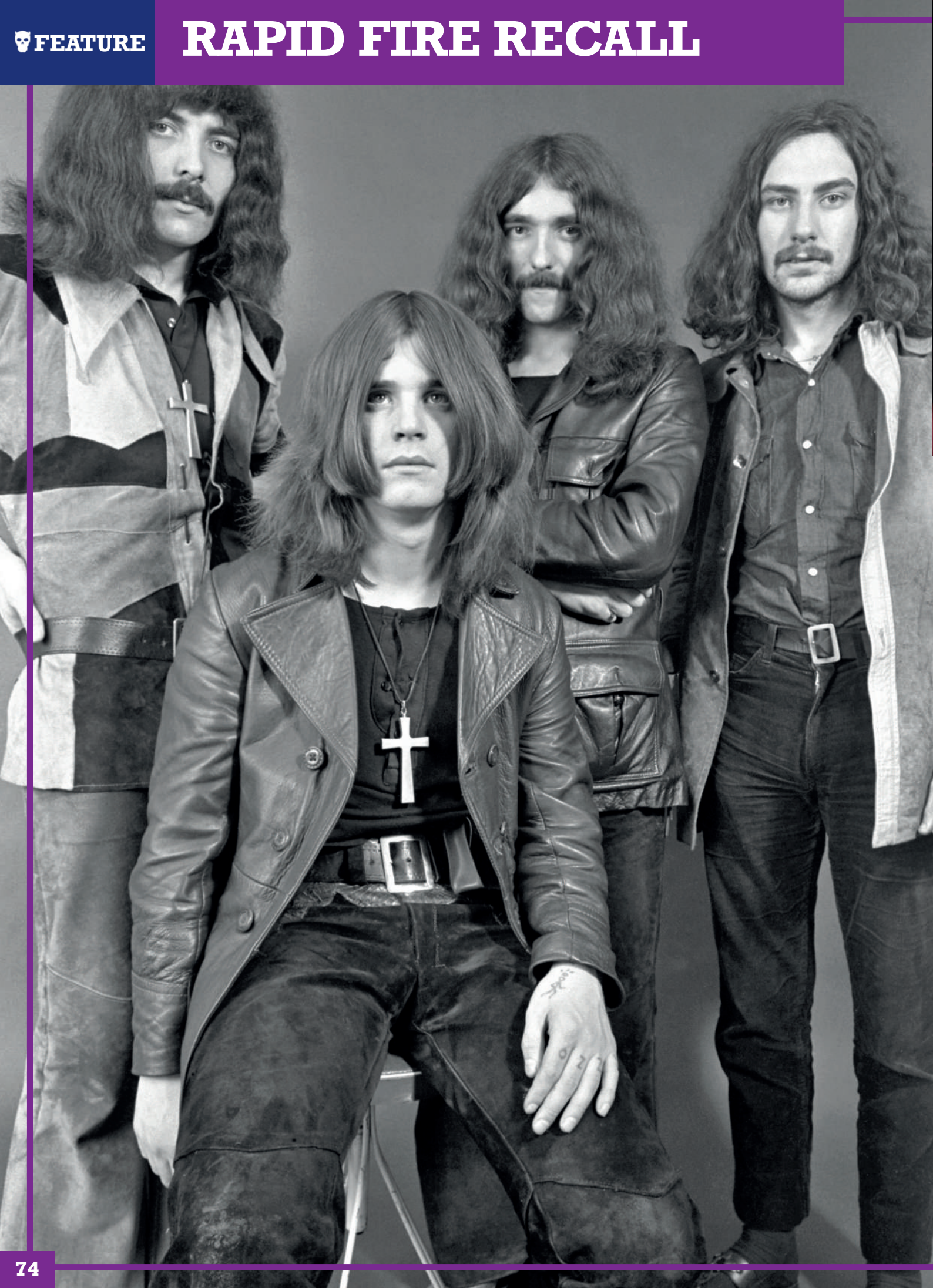
CREATIVE FREEDOM

"Black Sabbath was much more than just a riff machine and I'm really glad we were bold enough to spread our wings. I'm so proud that we allowed ourselves to go into other areas that had been with us since we were kids, like jazz and blues. We allowed subtleties to come out, ►

Photos: Getty Images/Roger Morton/Cleopatra Records; Getty Images/Walt Disney Television

"THE BAND WAS REALLY GOOD, TIGHT AND TOUGH LIKE LEATHER BECAUSE WE'D SPENT A LOT OF TIME WORKING TOGETHER. WE ALREADY HAD A LOT OF ROAD IN US. WE WERE TOUGH, WE WERE INTUITIVE AND WE HAD EACH OTHER'S BACKS."

RAPID FIRE RECALL



rather than constantly being this big, dominating thing. We were growing, developing more individual tastes, and wanting to risk more. For example, we did a song called 'Supertzar' [on 1975's 'Sabotage'] and we got a huge chamber choir involved. The song came out of a riff that Tony had that he kept playing all the f*ckin' time. We said, 'Are you actually going to do anything with that?' and he was like, 'Oh no, I don't think I will.' But one day he'd added another part and that bust things wide open. That gave me and Geezer room to go to very different places. I put on xylophones, gongs, tubular bells. The song became this entire orchestral piece with this wonderful choir that sounded so demonic and gothic. I adored it, thought it was incredible. I loved the fact that we were stepping out and that we weren't afraid."

SPLITTING WITH OZZY

"Ozzy had left once in 1977 and had then come back, but in '79 Tony decided that he had to go. The band wasn't functioning. I do know that I was reluctant to make the change, but I fell in with Tony's decision that we needed to move on. Geezer fell in with it too. I hated the conversation Ozzy and I had. I've regretted it pretty much until now and I thoroughly, thoroughly missed him when he wasn't with us any more. Ronnie James Dio came in and he was a really nice man and a very good singer. But the whole thing was uncomfortable."

LEAVING SABBATH IN 1980

"I was just at the end of everything. I was an alcoholic and my alcoholism had grown to such a point that I had to drink every single hour of the day, every single day. I was drinking away the loss of Oz, but I was also drinking away the loss of my mother, who'd recently died. I felt terrible about everything and I was running away from everything. The alcohol became more important than anything else. It took me over and became more important than family and more important than the son I had. The alcohol became more important than the band, more important than the audience, and more important than me. It's a f*cking horrible place to be. Eventually I realised that things had to change, so my first spell in recovery was in 1981, about a year after I left the 'Heaven And Hell' tour. By '83 I was doing a lot better, so I rejoined Black Sabbath and we did 'Born Again' with Ian Gillan as vocalist. I did the album totally clean and sober, but after it was finished I still hadn't learnt how to be honest enough in my sobriety. So I picked up a drink and it was one more trip to detox for me. Finally on 2 January 1984 I got sober once more and fortunately the story has a happy ending. I've been clean and sober ever since."

COMING BACK TO SABBATH IN 1997

"When I finally hooked in with Sabbath again I was already well experienced in staying sober inside any given situation, even working with other people who needed to get sober themselves. Rejoining Sabbath at that time led to some contractual problems, but I was so happy to see them and to be on the stage with them again. It was just fantastic, brilliant. But in May of '98 I had a heart attack. Bizarrely, it wasn't so bad. When it happened I said to the guys, 'I want to come on the road. Don't leave me out of the European tour.' But then I had to follow doctor's orders, da, da, da. It pissed me off. I wanted to play."

THE PROPOSED 2012 REUNION OF THE ORIGINAL SABBATH

"The fact that it didn't happen was all down to the contract I was offered. I made it well known to everybody who was important that I wanted something that was fair, and it just didn't happen. Even if someone had held a gun to my head I couldn't have signed that contract. It was one of the most regrettable things I've ever gone through in my life and I was particularly sad for the fans over how things ended up."

RELATIONSHIP WITH GEEZER, TONY, AND OZZY NOW

"Some of the things that were said at one time or another were simply not the truth, so it was hard to have a relationship with the three of them when they'd made statements that were very troubling to me. It was hard to deal with. So when they said things to me in the press I retaliated as much as I could. But has it stopped me from loving them? No. Do I still love them? Yes. I certainly don't resent them. I just wish them well. I wish them all the best, I really do. That's where my heart lies."

Photos: Getty Images/Chris Walter/WireImage; Getty Images/Richard E Aaron/Redferns

UNCOVERED

Avenger. From Newcastle. Signed to Neat. Very NWOBHM.

The Metal Factory

Neat Records may have started in a bingo hall in what was, at the time, the unfashionable north east of England. But it was undeniably a major catalyst of the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal movement that sprung up at the end of the '70s. Neat expert *John Tucker* explores this unique label's place in rock history...

IN MARCH 2011, THE Borough Theatre on Wallsend's High Street East was demolished as part of a plan to regenerate the area. Local historians had battled in vain to save it. Built in 1909, they argued that it had served as a theatre, cinema, and bingo hall, and so was a building of cultural significance and importance to the local community. Bizarrely, however, no one seemed to remember that in the late '70s and '80s the Borough Theatre was also home to Impulse Studios and Neat Records, probably the most important independent heavy metal record label in the genre's history. It wasn't the only small-scale label to play a part in the development of the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal – the contributions of Ebony, Guardian and Heavy Metal are all significant – but it was Neat up in the north east of England that launched bands that would change the very perception of what heavy metal was, or should be.

MOST SYNONYMOUS WITH NEAT RECORDS ARE RAVEN AND VENOM. BASTIONS OF THE NEW WAVE OF BRITISH HEAVY METAL, BOTH BANDS WOULD CHANGE THE FACE OF METAL WORLDWIDE. RAVEN'S SELF-PROCLAIMED 'ATHLETIC ROCK' FORMED THE TEMPLATE FOR SPEED METAL, WHILE VENOM ADDED BLACK METAL TO THE GENRE'S LEXICON.

IN A convoluted way, the seeds of Neat Records were first sown way back in 1966. Back then David Wood wanted to be a musician, but eventually chose to go for the next best thing. If he couldn't be in a band, he would record them instead.

"I decided I would set up a little studio in Wallsend," he explains. "I approached the manager at what had been an old theatre, but what was then a bingo hall, and said, 'You've got some space in there that I could perhaps use as a small studio...' That's how it all began.

"At first it was very, very basic equipment-wise and it took quite a while to establish ourselves in the industry," Wood continues. "It was in an industrial area rather than an artistic area. I remember one drummer in a local band coming in and saying to me, 'A recording studio in Wallsend? You must be f*cking joking!'"

The Impulse studio was soon swallowing up money that Wood and his team couldn't afford to lose. If the business was going to work then the studio would have to have people using it all the time. Downtime wasn't really an option.

"We recorded all comers," remembers Wood. "Everything from folk music to bands and choirs. We did stuff for television and radio just when commercial radio was starting, and gradually managed to create a business." The studio's location was hardly ideal, though. "The building itself was never really totally suitable as a studio because it had a lot of stairs," Wood laughs. "People didn't like to carry Marshall amps and speakers up and down stairs and I can understand that. But that's where we were, so we just got on with it."

OVER THE years a huge mythology has grown up around Neat Records, but it's worth noting that it began life as just another label operating out of Impulse. Wood ►

recalls that he couldn't use the Impulse name for a record label "as that was already copyrighted in America." So he got around that little issue by recording and releasing music by a number of acts on various label names – Wudwink, Picador, and Rubber Records to name but three – each focusing on a different genre. Rubber Records, Wood's folk label, even had a Top 30 hit in both the UK singles and album charts in August 1975 with Mike Harding's 'Rochdale Cowboy' and its parent album 'Mrs 'Ardin's Kid'. Wood's next label was Neat, and he even envisaged a sister label called – drum roll please – Tidy! Fortunately it never saw the light of day.

RIGHT FROM the start Neat tended to be disorganised. Release dates came and went, and attention to detail was lacking, meaning that in some cases records were issued with sleeves whose front covers carried a different title to the actual record centre. The most famous mistake was Venom's misprinted 'In League With Satin'. The front cover of White Spirit's 'Back To The Grind', meanwhile, appeared with the words 'Backs To The Grind'. The band line-up on the rear of Crucifixion's 'Take It Or Leave It' was wholly incorrect. Both Sabre and Jaguar grumbled that their original sleeve artwork got lost and was replaced by something nowhere near as good.

Because the label was based up in what Wood once referred to as the "frozen uninhabited North" (or 'FUN' for short) he knew that image was everything. "It was always 'Neat Records... Oh yes, yes, let me put you through to our A&R department,'" recalls Raven bassist and vocalist John Gallagher, talking about the protocol adopted whenever anyone phoned the company. "There were only two people in the place! They'd hand the phone over and callers thought it was this empire, it was this 'record company'. No it wasn't. It was the backstage rooms of an old theatre that was a bingo hall downstairs!"

NEAT WASN'T even a metal label to begin with, issuing two early non-metal singles that were eclectic and commercially unsuccessful. NEAT 01, Motorway's 'All I Wanna Be Is Your Romeo' failed to excite the record-buying public, while the next release, 'One And Only Girl' by Janie McKenzie, was written by in-house producer Steve Thompson for a pre-teen local singer and was largely sold at her gigs.

RIGHT FROM THE START NEAT TENDED TO BE DISORGANISED. RELEASE DATES CAME AND WENT, AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL WAS LACKING, MEANING THAT IN SOME CASES RECORDS WERE ISSUED WITH SLEEVES WHOSE FRONT COVERS CARRIED A DIFFERENT TITLE TO THE ACTUAL RECORD CENTRE. THE MOST FAMOUS MISTAKE WAS VENOM'S MISPRINTED 'IN LEAGUE WITH SATIN'.

But when the oddly named Tygers Of Pan Tang and Neat Records crossed paths, suddenly the stars aligned. The label would launch the band's career, leading to a few successful years with MCA before they split up. The Tygers would even act as a launchpad for future Thin Lizzy, Whitesnake and Blue Murder guitarist John Sykes. A Tygers reformation led by guitarist Robb Weir has now clocked up an additional 20 years to date. Two other Neat acts – Fist and White Spirit, the latter featuring

THE NEW NEAT SINGLES — ALREADY 'LEGENDS' INSIDE A WEEK!
VENOM
Neat 13
'Bloodlust'
'Blood Lust is the almost too perfect hell brew spew laden magnum opus that leaves nothing to the imagination' ...SOUNDS (Single of the week)
JAGUAR
Neat 16
'Axe Crazy'
'Destined to become a cult classic - buy now and store as a hedge against inflation' ...KERRANG
HEAVY PETTIN'
Neat 17
'Roll The Dice'
'This has all the spontaneous drive of a 'live' performance, captured in the studio' ...KERRANG
WARRIOR
DEAD WHEN IT COMES TO LOVE
WARRIOR Neat 20
(Live) ..Already in the HM Charts!
'Dead When It Comes To Love'
Always available free - send S.A.E. for Neat News III. Neat Records,
71 High Street East, Wallsend, Tyne & Wear, England, NE28 7RJ.
Distribution: Pinnacle (0689) 27000.

War Machine, who released the 'Unknown Soldier' album on Neat in 1986

Iron Maiden guitarist Janick Gers – would taste a modicum of major label success, as would Tobruk and, notably, Heavy Pettin'. Blitzkrieg are still doing the rounds today, as are Avenger and Tysondog. Another UK band, Warrior, have a new album coming soon. All of these bands cut their teeth – and their first records – at Impulse Studios for Neat. Satan, Jaguar, Cloven Hoof, Hellanbach and Warfare, along with less heavy acts like Saracen and even Wishbone Ash, are all part of the label's catalogue as well.

Most synonymous with Neat Records, though, are Raven and Venom. Bastions of the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal, both bands would change the face of metal worldwide. Raven's self-proclaimed 'athletic rock' formed the template for speed metal, while Venom added black metal to the genre's lexicon.

MOST PEOPLE know by now that the NWOBHM was given its name when *Sounds* music newspaper editor Alan Lewis added the words New Wave Of British Heavy Metal to a feature written by Geoff Barton after he'd witnessed a show featuring Angel Witch, Iron Maiden, and headliners Samson at London's Music Machine venue in May of 1979. Not long afterwards Barton went to Sheffield at the invitation of Def Leppard, writing a feature on the band that appeared in the issue of *Sounds* dated 16 June 1979. Up in Whitley Bay, this article was noticed by some of the Tygers Of Pan Tang, as frontman at the time Jess Cox recalls.

"I remember picking up *Sounds* and sitting at – let's call him the manager because that's kind of what he became – Tom Noble's house. There was a double-page spread on this band called Def Leppard. I remember thinking 'What the hell's a Def Leppard? Stupid name!' And we were called Tygers of Pan Tang! Anyway, we read the piece and Tom said 'Well, that sounds like you.' We'd done one demo by then. We started in November '78, and in January '79 we'd saved up money by playing at Mingles [a local club where the Tygers had a residency]. We went to Neat Records, or Impulse Recording Studios as it was called, and recorded a three-track demo. So we sent this demo to the guy who wrote the piece in *Sounds* and the next week we were in the paper with some other bands. And they were saying 'Look, it's the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal spreading across the country. Here's one from Newcastle, here's Def Leppard from Sheffield, here's Iron Maiden from London, Angel Witch from London, Saxon from Barnsley.' We were in this five or six 'first band' phase that started it all."

UNCOVERED

Fist. Discovered by Neat, they released one album on MCA before returning to their original label.

"We played Whitley Bay High School," fellow Tyger Robb Weir says. "It was an after-school event in the gymnasium and there were two lads there who'd heard of us. They asked their dad if he'd come along and have a look and a listen, because they thought we were really good. Their dad owned a recording studio, and he was called Dave Wood. He had Impulse Recording Studio in Wallsend and he came along... Dave and Tom Noble got talking and the next thing we know is that we've been invited into the studio to record some of our original songs. One of the songs we recorded was 'Don't Touch Me There'."

There's some confusion as to when 'Don't Touch Me There' was officially released on Neat. The label didn't work like a major, shipping thousands of units to stores for release on a set day. But a brochure for Impulse Studios produced early in 1980 listed the date as December 1979. The first pressing came in an oversized sleeve, thus making it rather collectible. That same month, Iron Maiden, with their 'Soundhouse Tapes' EP now available via mail order, broadcast a session for *The Friday Rock Show* and announced they'd signed to EMI Records. Def Leppard had recently come off the road supporting AC/DC and were now working on their debut album, 'On Through The Night'. Saxon, meanwhile, were completing their final dates on Motörhead's 'Bomber' tour and were thinking about how to follow up their commercially disappointing first album without getting dropped. These were interesting times for the nascent NWOBHM and 'Don't Touch Me There' appeared at just the right moment. Alerted to the possibilities of this new 'movement', MCA Records began to take an interest in what was happening on Tyneside.

> "THE BUILDING ITSELF WAS NEVER REALLY TOTALLY SUITABLE AS A STUDIO BECAUSE IT HAD A LOT OF STAIRS. PEOPLE DIDN'T LIKE TO CARRY MARSHALL AMPS AND SPEAKERS UP AND DOWN THE STAIRS AND I CAN UNDERSTAND THAT. BUT THAT'S WHERE WE WERE, SO WE JUST GOT ON WITH IT."
> **DAVE WOOD, NEAT OWNER**

THE EARLY months of 1980 saw two more Neat releases, Fist's 'Name Rank And Serial Number' single (with its picture sleeve designed by someone called Conrad Lant) and White Spirit's 'Back To The Grind' 45. MCA Records came calling and David Wood did a deal with them with a view to being a feeder label, discovering and nurturing talent that would then graduate to the major label. The

Atomkraft: self-styled purveyors of 'total metal'

Black Rose released two albums on Neat

Tygers Of Pan Tang, Fist and White Spirit soon found themselves working for MCA. "Deals were done," says Robb Weir, "and we found ourselves with a major record label, which obviously delighted us all, including our manager. MCA pressed 50,000 copies of the 'Don't Touch Me There' single. That's the difference between a local record company and a major. The single charted, though not in the Top 40. But it was in the lower reaches of the charts, and that's the power of a major company."

But although Tygers Of Pan Tang didn't do too badly out of the deal, releasing four chart-bound albums and a handful of hit singles, neither Fist nor White Spirit stayed the course. Both bands released just one album apiece with MCA in 1980 as first White Spirit put out 'White Spirit', then Fist issued 'Turn The Hell On'. But by 1982 Fist were back with Neat for their 'Back With A Vengeance' LP and a 7" single of a cover of 'The Wanderer'. Originally made famous by Dion, Status Quo would later take this song into the charts. White Spirit, meanwhile, struggled on without a label – or their guitarist, Janick Gers, who had left to join Gillan.

Only one other single came out on Neat in 1980 – but what a single it was! The 'athletic rock' trio that was Raven – brothers John and Mark Gallagher on bass/vocals and guitar respectively, and drummer Rob Hunter – had already developed a reputation for their larger-than-life, frenzied stage performances. Some of that energy transferred to their frenetic, classic debut single 'Don't Need Your Money'.

THE FOLLOWING year, 1981, proved to be a pivotal year for Neat Records. Alongside a clutch of new singles including Bitches Sin's 'Always Ready (For Love)' and Blitzkrieg's 'Buried Alive', Neat unleashed its 'Lead Weight' compilation album in May.

The label's first full-length album release, albeit only available on cassette (it would later be licensed to overseas labels and pressed to vinyl), 'Lead Weight' received the full five-star treatment in Geoff Barton's review in *Sounds* music paper.

Things were looking good for Neat and Wood wanted to press home the advantage, so Raven were given the green light to record an album. In-house producer Steve Thompson did have his concerns though.

"I said to Dave, 'I'll do the album but I can't be in the studio all day every day with these guys because they're crazy. So let's do it on a three-day week.' I thought if I did three days of this intense activity, then I'd have a few days to recover before I was back in the studio with them again. That seemed to work and the band were OK with that. But even then it was incredibly intense. They didn't sit down and relax to record, they went berserk in the studio. In fact, they went so berserk that I had to gaffer tape the headphones to their heads because they kept flying off..."

"The album's title track 'Rock Until You Drop' started with a thumping bass drum, so we decided we should have a marching army," explains Thompson. But with just the three band members, Thompson, his engineer Mickey Sweeney, and tape op Conrad Lant (the man who'd designed the Fist single, remember) on hand, no

Photos: Pete Cronin; John Tucker

Raven. Inventors of 'athletic rock'

matter how much double and triple tracking they tried they simply couldn't replicate the sound of an army on the march. Calling a break to consider his options the producer drank a cup of coffee and scrunched up the plastic cup before throwing it away. Then he had his light-bulb moment.

"I thought 'Ah, that's the sound.' So I went and got a few hundred coffee cups that were in a store cupboard, threw them down on the loo floor and had the guys march on top of that."

In all, some 3,000 cups were stomped on to get the effect Steve Thompson wanted, which was all well and good until the following morning when an apoplectic David Wood wanted to know what had happened to a year's supply of disposable plastic cups.

"I said, 'Never mind the cost, just wait until you hear the track. It's brilliant!' David was angry that I'd used the entire supply of coffee cups. I was just chuffed that I'd got this sound."

RAVEN'S 'ROCK Until You Drop' album appeared in September 1981, just ahead of the one other album the label released that year, Venom's 'Welcome To Hell'.

Venom had lost rhythm guitarist Eric Cook, generally known as the sensible one with short hair, and were on the lookout for a replacement as Cook went on to guide the band's career as their manager. Fortunately, lead guitarist Jeff Dunn had met a like-minded person at his girlfriend's house.

"I got talking to this guy, this Conrad, who said he played rhythm guitar and was also working at Neat Records at Impulse Recording Studios," remembers Dunn. "He was actually on a Youth Opportunity Scheme, a YOP. In the late-'70s and early-'80s the UK government used to pay a company a certain amount of money to take a youngster off the dole [unemployment benefit] and give them a job, something to do. So as soon as Conrad told me that, my ears went 'Ooh, recording studio...'

"I'd been into Impulse before and enquired about doing a demo tape there, but had walked away with my tail between my legs, because we just couldn't afford it. So suddenly there I was, in a room with a guy who's actually on a YOP scheme at Impulse Studios, making tea and learning how to splice tape..."

"I think I started off as a tea boy," recalls Conrad Lant. "I wasn't an electrician, I had no f*cking idea about electricity. So getting a job in a studio which is all about plugs and cables and lights... I did kind of have the butterflies in the belly thinking 'I hope these guys don't ask me to f*cking run this stuff.' But they were brilliant. The engineer, Mickey Sweeney, said 'Look, dude, I'll take you through it bit by bit,' and the first job he had me doing was soldering a set of headphones. It was like two wires and it was a simple case of 'You put the soldering iron there, it heats up, then you put a bit of solder on, put the wire on, boom, it's done, move over to the next one, put the cover back on.'

"I was blown away that I could actually do this stuff."

Enthusiastic and keen to learn, Lant built up his knowledge base. "I got to a stage where I could actually run the desk and everything by myself... So when the engineer came in he could just turn the faders up and get on with the session."

JUST LIKE Raven, who had been through several drummers before they achieved a settled line-up, Venom were not quite there yet. The bassist, Alan Winston, had left, and Lant dropped two strings to fill the vacancy. Given that they wanted to present Venom with an air of mystique, Lant, Dunn, and drummer Tony Bray adopted the now-familiar alter egos of Cronos, Mantas and Abaddon respectively, with vocalist Clive Archer bizarrely taking the name Jesus Christ.

"It was so frustrating because I didn't have any demos," concedes Lant. "And Venom was never the kind of band to go and play the clubs. The label had no way of knowing what I was doing or whether it was any good, so trying to convince David Wood that he should get my band in the studio was going nowhere because we had zero reputation.

"I said to Mickey Sweeney, 'Look, as I work in the recording studio nine-to-five, but some of the recording sessions go on until 11, 12, one, two, three in the morning, I'll stay back and work the extra time for no extra wages if you work some studio time for me.' He said, 'Not a problem.' So then I had to go see David Wood and basically say the same thing. 'Look, dude, I'll work extra time in the studio, I'll wash the stairs, I'll even wash your car, whatever. Can I have some free tape to record onto? Mickey the engineer, he'll work for free...'

"So I think David saw my enthusiasm and my determination and eventually he gave me a few hours in the studio, which was just awesome. I couldn't wait to tell the guys, 'Get your sh*t together. We need a van

Photos: IconicPix/Ray Palmer Archive; Getty Images/Fin Costello/Redferns

"WE WERE ALWAYS BUGGING DAVE WOOD TO RELEASE A SINGLE. I'M STILL CONVINCED HE PRESSED UP MAYBE EVEN JUST 500 COPIES OF THE 'IN LEAGUE WITH SATAN' SINGLE AND RELEASED IT SO HE COULD SAY 'THERE YOU GO; YOUR BAND'S SH*T, NOBODY'S INTERESTED, NOW F*CK OFF.' BUT WHEN WE RELEASED THAT SINGLE THE F*CKING WORLD CHANGED."

MANTAS, VENOM

Tysondog. Very heavy metal, very Neat.

quick, we need to get the gear in, we're going to the studio.'"

THE FIRST Venom demo went to metal journalist Geoff Barton, who had been such a supporter of all things Neat. He proceeded to put all three tracks in his three-track playlist one week in *Sounds*. A second demo convinced Wood to issue a single. Archer had left the band by this time. Possibly Wood saw potential. Maybe he just wanted to get the band off his back.

"We were always bugging Dave to release a single," recalls Dunn. "To this day I'm still convinced he pressed up maybe 1000, maybe even just 500 copies of the 'In League With Satan' single and released it so he could turn around to us and say, 'There you go; your band's sh*t, nobody's interested, now f*ck off.' But when we released that single the f*cking world changed."

People were, in fact, *very* interested in Venom. The band arranged another demo session and the tapes became 'Welcome To Hell', the first of five Venom albums that Neat would release.

> "IT WAS ALWAYS 'NEAT RECORDS... OH YES, YES, LET ME PUT YOU THROUGH TO OUR A&R DEPARTMENT.' THERE WERE ONLY TWO PEOPLE IN THE PLACE! THEY'D HAND THE PHONE OVER AND CALLERS THOUGHT IT WAS THIS EMPIRE, IT WAS THIS 'RECORD COMPANY'. NO IT WASN'T. IT WAS THE BACKSTAGE ROOMS OF AN OLD THEATRE THAT WAS A BINGO HALL DOWNSTAIRS!"
> **JOHN GALLAGHER, RAVEN**

A handful of rehearsals-cum-gigs aside, Venom's first real show was at a festival in Poperinge, Belgium, on 4 June 1982. Then, having been taken to America by Megaforce Records boss Jonny Z, Venom's second and third shows were in New York in April 1983. By this time the band had released the devastating and game-changing 'Black Metal' album, which gave birth to the sub-genre of the same name.

The group were supported by Megaforce's new protégés Metallica at the New York gigs, and the West Coast band would also go on to open for Venom on six of the shows on their 1984 'Seven Dates Of Hell' European trek. Venom, of course, would eventually be recognised as a seminal influence on the development of the thrash metal scene of the early '80s, though their commercial impact would never match up to that of many of the US bands who owed them a creative debt such as Metallica, Slayer and Megadeth.

EARLY IN the sessions for their fifth studio album, originally titled 'Deadline', Mantas quit the group. The album would eventually appear in 1987 as 'Calm Before The Storm' on the Filmtrax label, while Mantas recorded a quite different solo album, 1988's 'Winds Of Change', for Neat.

With a tortuous history and assorted comings and goings, Venom have carried on to this day with Cronos generally at the helm. Another version of the band, Venom Inc., sees Mantas working with Tony 'Demolition' Dolan, whose band Atomkraft released their debut album, 'Future Warriors', on Neat back in 1985. Dolan also fronted Venom when Cronos was out of the band. The history of Venom and its ever-changing group members is a story in itself...

RAVEN, NEAT'S other flagship act, left the label long before Mantas and Venom parted company. After signing to Megaforce, Jonny Z brought them to the States for the first time toward the end of 1982 for a handful of shows in and around New York. A full US tour supported by Metallica – dubbed the 'Kill 'Em All For One' tour – took place in August of 1983, and by the time of their second full US trek, this time with Anthrax opening for them, they knew their future lay in America, not their home town of Newcastle.

"Do you want to stay at home and beg 20 bucks a week off Dave Wood and do nothing, or are you going to come over and do something in the States?" asks John Gallagher rhetorically. "We went over to America and have pretty much been there ever since. We just took a chance. At the time Rob was in a relationship, I was married and my brother was married. All that went down the toilet."

On 3 August 1984 Raven, Metallica and Anthrax appeared together at New York's Roseland Ballroom. Soon afterwards all three acts were signed to major labels. Metallica went to Elektra, Anthrax signed with Island, and Raven were picked up by Atlantic. Yet the trio of studio albums Raven recorded for Neat – the aforementioned 'Rock Until You Drop', 1982's 'Wiped Out', and 'All For One' from 1983 – still rank among metal's finest.

Although the face behind the Raven drum kit has changed a few times, the Gallagher brothers still continue to front the band they first put together back in the mid-'70s.

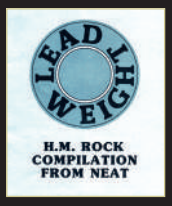
NEAT RECORDS ploughed on for some years, but despite issuing a number of exciting albums and singles, by the 1990s it had begun to flounder. Former Tygers Of Pan Tang singer Jess Cox joined forces with David Wood and together they relaunched Neat Records as Neat Metal in 1995, giving the label a new lease of life until they eventually sold it to the Sanctuary group in 2000.

With the demolition of the Borough Theatre 11 years later, the physical home of Neat Records vanished, but what will always remain is a catalogue of great heavy metal music that will live on forever.

If you want to delve further into the story of Neat Records, check out the new podcast series Heavier! Faster! Louder! The Story Of Tyneside Heavy Metal. *Written by John Tucker, it's narrated by renowned Newcastle hard rock DJ Alan Robson, and is available for your delectation and delight on Apple Podcasts, Spotify and more...*

Five Really Neat Releases...

Tygers Of Pan Tang – 'Don't Touch Me There'
(NEAT 03, 7", Dec 1979)
Where it all started... Resplendent in its gold sleeve depicting a snarling tiger, Tygers Of Pan Tang's debut single was an eye-catching release that featured neither the name of the band nor the song title on its front cover. The pugilistic stomp of 'Don't Touch Me There' was flipped with two other worthwhile cuts in 'Burnin' Up' and 'Bad Times'.



Various – 'Lead Weight'
(NEAT 1000, cassette album, May 1981)
Neat's first foray into the world of the long-player, this cassette-only release is an exciting compilation of B-sides and studio out-takes. Sessions for singles routinely led to three songs being put to tape and a number of these cuts first came to light here. Given a five-star review in *Sounds* at the time, 'Lead Weight' is an obvious contender for the best ever NWOBHM compilation.

Blitzkrieg – 'Buried Alive'
(NEAT 10, 7", May 1981)
Metallica covered the eponymous flip side, assuring that 'Blitzkrieg' found an audience that the original single (swiftly deleted when the band split up) could never hope to match. But that has also meant that 'Blitzkrieg' has overshadowed the lead cut. That's a shame, because 'Buried Alive' is an electrifying romp with a rather clever lyric.

Raven – 'Rock Until You Drop'
(NEAT 1001, LP, September 1981)
The wall-to-wall madness of Raven's early sound is captured on this, their debut album. Exhilarating performances throughout disguise the complicated, protracted album sessions, and Geoff Barton gave 'Rock Until You Drop' a five-star review in *Sounds*, dubbing it "the best LP to emerge out of the NWOBHM since Saxon's 'Wheels Of Steel'."

Venom – 'Welcome To Hell'
(NEAT 1002, LP, December 1981)
Although eclipsed by their second album, 'Black Metal', 'Welcome To Hell' is a noisemonger's delight – antagonistic and aggressive and lacking a single shred of subtlety. The trio really didn't care whether you liked them or not, they just did it anyway. Another top-marks review came courtesy of Geoff Barton, although he did point out that the album had the "hi-fi dynamics of a 50-year-old pizza."

ROSE TATTOO

'SCARRED FOR LIFE'

DATELINE: NOVEMBER 1982

DOES THE THIRD ALBUM FROM THE CULT AUSSIE STREET FIGHTING MEN STILL STAND UP TO SCRUTINY?

ROSE TATTOO
'Scarred For Life'
(Albert Productions)
Released: November 1982

LINE UP
ANGRY ANDERSON – lead vocals
PETE WELLS – slide guitar and vocals
ROB RILEY – lead and rhythm guitar
GEORDIE LEACH – bass
DALLAS 'DIGGER' ROYALL – drums

PRODUCED BY
Vanda & Young

RECORDED AT
Albert Studios, Sydney, Australia

TRACK LISTING
Scarred For Life (Anderson/Riley/Royall)
We Can't Be Beaten (Anderson/Riley)
Juice On The Loose (Anderson/Wells)
Who's Got The Cash (Anderson/Wells)
Branded (Anderson/Riley)
Texas (Anderson/Wells)
It's Gonna Work Itself Out (Anderson/Riley)
Sydney Girls (Anderson/Wells)
Dead Set (Anderson/Leach)
Revenge (Anderson/Wells)

ANGRY ANDERSON ON 'SCARRED FOR LIFE': "We were never very comfortable in the studio, we saw ourselves more as a live act. When we toured 'Scarred For Life' in America we gigged with ZZ Top, Aerosmith and Nazareth, and met the boys who went on to form Guns N' Roses."

THE IDEA THAT ROCK musicians want to portray themselves as bad boys, outsiders, modern day outlaws, is as old as the hills. Most of the time it's merely a marketing tool designed to fool teen fans who want to live vicariously through the musicians they admire. Every once in a while, though, a band springs up that truly *lives* the outlaw way. These groups are comprised of genuine rebels with a natural aversion to authority, who can't adapt to society's norms and who have to live beyond the bounds of society's conventions. More often than not even the music business has too many rules for these folk, which is why such acts rarely become superstars.

Back when it was first released in 1982, just one look at the cover of Rose Tattoo's third album, 'Scarred For Life', was enough to convince me that this band was no cynical marketing construct. The five guys scowling on the sleeve were clearly what you'd call 'lifers', in it till the end rather than for the fame and the financial rewards. If you were from Rose Tattoo's native Australia, you might have recognised the band's stylistic heritage. The Sharpies were a strictly Oz phenomenon, a suburban youth culture that generally favoured suedehead haircuts and tattoos long before Los Angeles started inking itself. Rose Tattoo certainly had their roots in that movement. The five band members were tattooed from head to toe, and if guitarist Pete Wells sported rock regulation long hair, his four mates were determinedly lacking in that department. These were people you wouldn't want to cross and who you'd very much want on your side when it all kicked off in the pub on a Friday night.

Rose Tattoo guitarist Pete Wells and vocalist Angry Anderson performing live in the early '80s

GIVEN THE ALBUM SLEEVE IMAGE IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE BAND HADN'T ABANDONED THEIR OUTLAW PRINCIPLES. BUT THERE'S A DEFINITE LACK OF FIRE RUNNING THROUGH 'SCARRED FOR LIFE', AS IF ROSE TATTOO HAD LOST SOME OF THE DESPERATION THAT HAD SO CLEARLY FUELLED THEIR EARLIER DAYS.

ROSE TATTOO had come to the switched-on UK rock fan's attention back in 1978 when their debut album 'Rose Tattoo' (released as 'Rock 'N' Roll Outlaw' in many territories) had demanded attention. Its insistence on hard-rocking boogie riffs, sweet-sounding slide guitar and vocalist Angry Anderson's gritty lyrics made the band a lot of friends, but it was too esoteric to go fully mainstream. Fellow Aussies AC/DC were in the process of knocking off their rough edges and acquiring a commercial sheen from producer Mutt Lange that would turn them into megastars. But by the time the Tatts arrived at this, their third album following on from 1981's 'Assault & Battery', it was clear that they weren't tempted to try to pull off the same trick. With famed Aussie producers Harry Vanda and George Young (AC/DC's pre-Mutt team) at the helm for the third time in a row, 'Scarred For Life' sounds like an album made by people who'd never heard US radio in their lives.

THAT'S NOT to say that Rose Tattoo were completely disinterested in developing a broader appeal. Whether by accident or design, 'It's Gonna Work Itself Out' has an undeniably poppy edge, while 'Sydney Girls' veers into moonstomping white boy reggae territory. The trouble is, neither song convinces. But the real problem with 'Scared For Life' is that some of the palpable anger that made the first Tatts album such a *tour de force* is missing here. Given the album sleeve image it was clear the band hadn't abandoned their outlaw way of life. But there's a definite lack of fire running through 'Scarred For Life', as if Rose Tattoo had lost some of the desperation that had so clearly fuelled their earlier days. Had the band made some money by this point? I don't know, but even the best songs on 'Scarred For Life' – the stomping title track and 'Branded' – seem somehow wistful, perhaps acknowledging the fact that the band members were growing older, if not necessarily wiser.

The component parts of the Rose Tattoo sound are still audible. Wells plays some lovely slide guitar throughout, and Anderson delivers his heartfelt lyrics with nothing less than absolute conviction. But there's a sense that the band's two driving forces are having a hard time galvanising the whole shebang to really kick out the jams. The best you can say about numbers like 'Who's Got The Cash', 'Texas' and 'Revenge' is that they would have made adequate B-sides, which isn't much of a recommendation when you think about it.

'SCARRED FOR Life' isn't a bad album, but it isn't a *good* album either. The cover promises a totally attitudinal record, but the music fails to deliver. It's no surprise that it didn't prove to be a game changer for Rose Tattoo, and it was left to Guns N' Roses some five years later to channel RT's outlaw spirit into something indecently successful. For their part, Rose Tattoo remained a connoisseur's choice, with those who appreciate the band resolutely united in the belief that it never got better than that classic first album.

HOWARD JOHNSON

ORIGINAL REVIEW

"Rose Tattoo are a band who have graduated with honours from their early thrashing days and learned to manipulate and direct their power and excitement, putting dynamics and diversity into their music instead of just butting the listener in the face with their skull-denting riffola."

– David Lewis, *Sounds*, November 1982

'SCARRED FOR LIFE' FACT: The album was the first Rose Tattoo LP to feature guitarist Robin Riley, who joined in 1981 as a replacement for Mick Cocks. Riley himself then left in 1983, only to return to play on the 2000 live album '25 To Life' and 2002's studio effort 'Pain'.

Photos: IconicPix/Setton/Dalle; IconicPix/Bascop/Dalle

STRIKTLY FOR KONNOISSEURS

MONSTER ROCK ALBUMS FOR THOSE WHO NEED TO GO DEEPER

SWEET – 'Give Us A Wink'

(RCA)

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1976

LINE UP
BRIAN CONNOLLY – LEAD VOCALS, STRING MACHINE
STEVE PRIEST – BASS, VOCALS, CELLI
ANDY SCOTT – GUITARS, VOCALS, CELLI, SYNTHESIZERS, VOICE BAG
MICK TUCKER – PERCUSSION, VOCALS, CELLI, PHASED GONG

FOR THOSE OF US who cut our musical teeth during the giddy years of '70s glam rock, no artist looms larger in loon pants, mascara and stack-heeled boots than Sweet. They were the leading lights of the glam production company Chinnichap, founded by songwriters Nicky Chinn and Mike Chapman. The two entrepreneurs set in motion a conveyor belt of top glam fodder that included Suzi Quatro, Mud, the Arrows, and Smokie, and eventually racked up over 50 UK Top 40 hits. But Sweet (who were also know as *The* Sweet early in their career) were never entirely comfortable with that style and were in truth more of a proto-metal outfit. The album 'Desolation Boulevard', released in November 1974, showed they were growing tired of the limitations of glam and the following year the band split from Chinn and Chapman and started writing for themselves. By February of 1976 a new studio LP, 'Give Us A Wink', was in the shops.

THE BAND'S intent to make a genuinely heavy record is immediately apparent on album opener 'The Lies In Your Eyes'. Vocalist Brian Connelly delivers the melody in an aggressive rasp that marries well with guitarist Andy Scott's fuzzed metal riffs and drummer Mick Tucker's Bonhamesque rhythmic work.

Yet what's most interesting about listening to 'Give Us A Wink' today is the fact that it sounds remarkably fresh, while reminding the listener that it was also ahead of its time. The speedy, almost punky riffs of 'Cockroach', 'White Mice', and 'Keep It In' easily pre-date the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal and here Sweet are even a couple of years ahead of the faster, commercial, leather and studs approach that would be adopted by Judas Priest. The hit single 'Action', meanwhile, is an ambitious, almost operatic song that offers up shades of Cheap Trick and even Queen's 'Bohemian Rhapsody'. The number is in stark contrast to the simplistic pop metal of Sweet's earlier Chinnichap material like 'Wig Wam Bam' and 'Block Buster'. My favourite song in this collection, though, is 'Yesterday's Rain', a mid-paced rocker that's so good we can *almost* forgive the distinctly suspect lyrics. Also worthy of a mention is the album's unusual closing song 'Healer'. Clocking in at a hearty seven minutes and 18 seconds, it starts slowly with a gentle chiming guitar overlaid with synths and a pleading, low-key vocal from Connelly. But by the time it reaches its climax you're wrapping your ears around a big, big number that's reminiscent of The Sensational Alex Harvey Band's 'The Faith Healer' – and not just because of the title similarity!

WHY 'GIVE Us A Wink' doesn't rank alongside other classic metal albums of the time is a mystery. It's definitely a match for Kiss's 'Destroyer' or Judas Priest's 'Stained Class'. Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley have often stated that without Sweet there would have been no Kiss. It's doubtful the hair metal explosion of the '80s would have happened without them either. Maybe '70s rockers never took 'Give Us A Wink' to their hearts because of its abysmal cover artwork. Nevertheless, you should listen to this album immediately and join me in acknowledging Sweet as one of the 1970s' great heavy bands.

Giles Hamilton

DONNIE IRIS – 'King Cool'

(MCA)

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1981

LINE UP
DONNIE IRIS – LEAD AND BACKGROUND VOCALS
MARK AVSEC – PIANO, ORGAN, SYNTHESIZERS, GLOCKENSPIEL, BACKGROUND VOCALS
MARTY LEE – GUITARS AND BACKGROUND VOCALS
ALBRITTON MCCLAIN – BASS GUITAR AND BACKGROUND VOCALS
KEVIN VALENTINE – DRUMS AND PERCUSSION

BORN DOMINIC IERACE IN Pennsylvania back in 1943, Donnie Iris first cut his teeth in a variety of college bands like The Fabutons, The Tri-Vels and Donnie And The Donnells. In 1964 he formed The Jaggerz, an R&B group that became popular in Ohio and Pennsylvania and eventually scored a US hit with 'The Rapper' in 1970.

After leaving The Jaggerz in 1976 Iris played with B.E. Taylor Group for a couple of years before falling in with Wild Cherry, a band riding high after the success of their single 'Play That Funky Music'. Here he met keyboardist, Mark Avsec, a musician Iris would collaborate with throughout his career.

As Wild Cherry petered out in 1979, Iris and Avsec formed a writing partnership that produced an unsuccessful disco single, 'Bring On The Eighties'. Undeterred, the pair returned to the studio with guitarist Marty Lee Hoenes, bassist Albritton McClain and drummer Kevin Valentine to record the debut Donnie Iris album, 'Back On The Streets'. Initially released on the independent Midwest National Records in 1980, Iris was soon snapped up by major label MCA for a five-album deal that saw 'Back On The Streets' reissued nationally. His first single for the label, 'Ah! Leah!', broke the US Top 30.

THE FOLLOWING year Iris recorded a second album, 'King Cool', with the same band. And after its release in August of 1981 Iris, Avsec, Hoenes, McClain and Valentine went out on the road as Donnie Iris And The Cruisers. Produced by Mark Avsec, 'King Cool' is a glorious amalgamation of a 1950s doo-wop harmony group meeting a 1980s AOR band head on, with Iris imitating Buddy Holly on the front cover, the epitome of geek chic.

Side one of the original vinyl offers up some great moments with 'Sweet Merilee', 'Pretender', and 'Love Is Like A Rock'. But it's on side two that you'll find the real gems, five of the best songs Iris has ever produced. 'Broken Promises' sees the musicians pushing vocal harmonies to their absolute limit. Just listen to the interplay at the end of the song and prepare to pick your jaw up off the floor. The '50s harmonies of 'My Girl' are given a marvellous '80s pop-rock sheen, while 'King Cool' itself sees the girl of Iris's affections losing out to the higher power of his electric guitar. With the gorgeously simple 'Color Me Blue' and the power-balladry of 'The Last To Know' bringing things to a close, the band finish things off in stunning form.

THE UNUSUAL combination of styles employed on 'King Cool' means this album still sounds unique today, but rock fans will particularly enjoy its muscular arrangements, driven by Marty Lee Hoenes's guitars. Iris leads from the front with some fine vocal performances, making 'King Cool' AOR at its finest, a kind of hard rock version of the Beach Boys.

Both 'Love Is Like A Rock' and 'My Girl' broke into the US Top 40, but sadly the album only made it to number 84. Even so, 'King Cool' would prove to be the band's commercial zenith. But at the ripe old age of 77 Iris is still working today, and we at *Rock Candy Mag* salute a genuine AOR trooper.

Rob Evans

Photos: Getty Images/Michael Putland; Getty Images/Paul Natkin

ROCK CANDY REISSUES

THE VERY LATEST HOT RE-RELEASES FROM THE LABEL

ORPHAN – 'Salute'

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1985

LINE UP
CHRIS BURKE-GAFFNEY – lead vocals, bass
STEVE McGOVERN – guitars, vocals
BRENT DIAMOND – keyboards, vocals
TERRY NORMAN TAYLOR – drums, percussion

BACKGROUND
A few months ago Rock Candy Records reissued the 1983 debut album 'Lonely At Night' from Canadian rockers Orphan. Now we're proud to bring you the band's second album 'Salute' – and a finer example of Maple Leaf Mayhem you will not find.

Orphan formed in Winnipeg, Manitoba in the early '80s, but had initially come together in 1978 using the handle of The Pumps. They released a moderately successful debut album, 'Gotta Move', in 1980, but a planned follow-up was shelved, forcing the band to re-evaluate their future. Undeterred they regrouped, scored a coveted contract with Portrait Records, and changed their name to Orphan. 'Lonely At Night' was produced in New York by Tony Bongiovi and Lance Quinn, the same team that nurtured Bon Jovi's debut record, released a year later in 1984.

'Salute' is a more mature and sophisticated record than Orphan's debut. It was produced by the same British team of Jon Astley and Phil Chapman that worked on The Pumps' album, was recorded on Long Island, New York, and oozes quality and class. Blessed with a polished sheen and a rich tapestry of songs, the sound is reminiscent of other impressive Canadian acts like Loverboy, Honeymoon Suite and Harlequin. But have no fear that this is an overly mellow effort. There's definitely enough pulsating hard rock here to satisfy the headbangers.

WHAT VOCALIST AND BASSIST CHRIS BURKE-GAFFNEY SAYS
"With 'Salute' we wanted to more clearly define who we were, a darker melodic Canadian rock band. But we also wanted to bring in some elements of the latest sounds. The rock scene was moving away from pure, classic rock and we found ourselves thinking that maybe we should go in the same direction to get ahead – as long as we could do it without sacrificing who we were. We all loved Led Zeppelin, but we were coming to really like Loverboy, The Cars and bands like that too. Aldo Nova was on tour and had a house close by the studio, so we rented it from him. But the tour ended early and he came home and found his house full. We ended up becoming friends and hanging out with him, did a little partying, and invited him to play on the track 'Steel & Iron' on the record."

TRACKS TO CHECK OUT
There are some great melodic rockers here. Listen to 'Stand Up', 'Lyin' To Me' and 'Uncle Sam Wants You' for proof positive of a new found Orphan sophistication. The luxuriant, widescreen vibe of 'The Way It Should Be', meanwhile, proves the band to be more than just a one-dimensional rock outfit.

MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK
The Rock Candy CD is fully remastered and features a 12-page colour booklet with enhanced artwork, together with a 3,500-word essay by *Rock Candy Mag* writer and Canadian rock expert Paul Suter.

THE WORD FROM RC BOSS DEREK OLIVER
"Once again Canada came up trumps with a record that should have exploded at radio and retail. Sadly that was not to be, but it certainly doesn't undermine the sheer class of 'Salute'. In fact, in some weird way the contents are actually enhanced by the fact that this album was overlooked and cast aside in favour of music that was far less impressive. If you love '80s melodic hard rock, then 'Salute' is a 'must hear', all raging guitar riffs, impressive vocals and stellar, shout-it-out-loud hooks. A hidden classic indeed."

ZON – 'Astral Projector'

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1978

LINE UP
DENTON YOUNG – lead vocals
HOWARD HELM – keyboards
BRIAN MILLER – guitars
JIM SAMSON – bass
KIM HUNT – drums

BACKGROUND
Zon was one of the finest Canadian musical exports of the late '70s and early '80s. Emerging from Toronto in 1977 the band quickly became a seasoned unit through hard gigging. They also developed songs that suggested they were not only influenced by traditional hard rock, but also loved progressive elements that other Canadian acts of the era such as Rush, Triumph, and Max Webster were similarly drawn to. Zon's music coalesced into a raging amalgam of progressive sounds with a solid hard rock undercurrent, which they built on with an impressive live show that not only focused on music, but also on inspiring visual elements. Record company interest quickly followed, with Epic Records leading the charge to sign a band that was starting to resemble a young Styx.

Zon's debut album, 'Astral Projector', made quite a splash, impressing rock fans and critics alike with its punchy content and adventurous arrangements. Vocalist Denton Young led the band through a knockout selection of tracks that were dressed to impress. Issued in 1978 at the height of pomp rock mania, the record even made an impact in faraway Europe. Geoff Barton, then of *Sounds* music paper in the UK, lauded 'Astral Projector' as an essential purchase. Somewhat bafflingly, though, Epic Records in Europe declined to release the album. Still, this didn't stop a good many Zon supporters from investing in an import copy of 'Astral Projector', which offered the added bonuses

of being pressed on ice blue vinyl and being housed in a lip-smacking gatefold sleeve.

WHAT KEYBOARDIST HOWARD HELM SAYS
"At the same time as [Triumph guitarist] Rik Emmett and Denton Young were playing together in a band called Act III, I was playing with Brian Miller, who ended up being the guitar player in Zon. We'd been mates since high school. We had a band together and it was a lot of fun. We once opened for [Triumph drummer] Gil Moore's old band. There's always been this sort of family connection between Triumph and Zon, because we all knew each other. Gil called Brian Miller to offer him the job in Triumph, but Brian turned him down. So Gil called Rik and they ended up doing their thing."

TRACKS TO CHECK OUT
The pomptastic 'Put On The Show' kicks matters off in majestic fashion, while the electrifying 'Man In The Mirror' is a glorious mash-up of Styx, Kansas, and Genesis. There's even pop rock on offer here thanks to 'Talkin' About' and 'Melody'. But the undeniably brilliant title track is the cream of the crop.

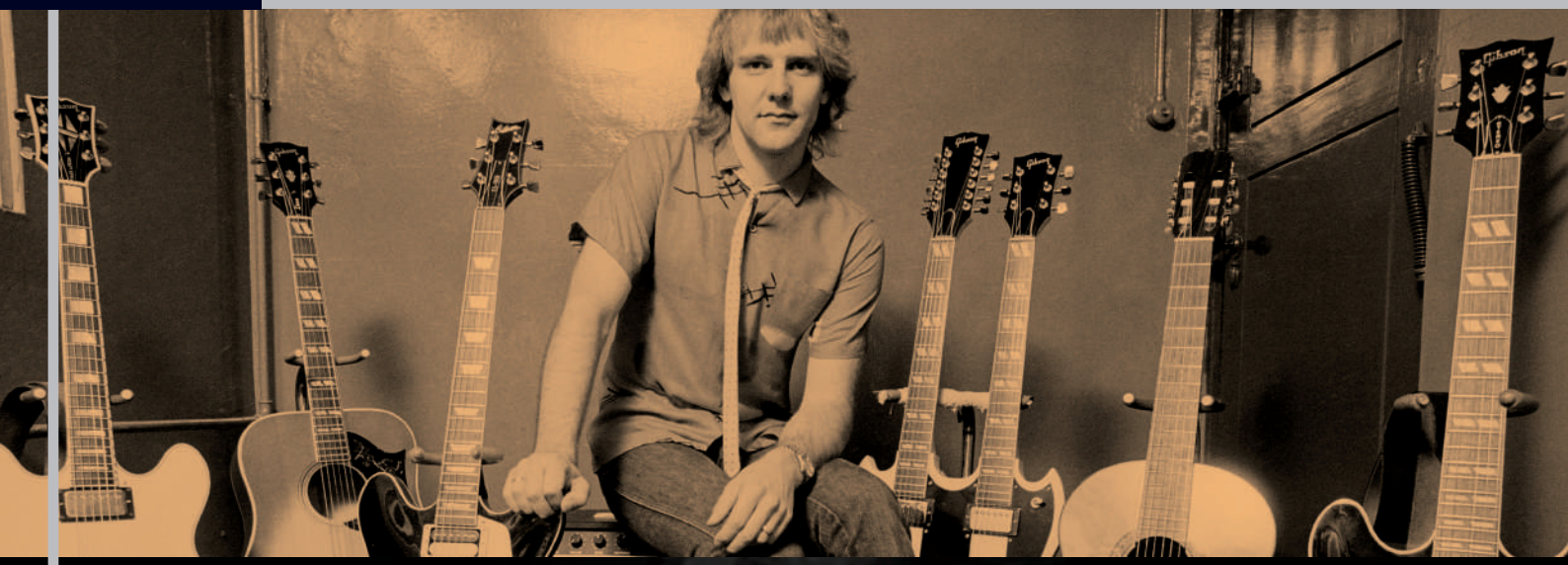
MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK
The Rock Candy CD is fully remastered and contains four previously unreleased bonus tracks, a 12-page colour booklet with unseen photos, enhanced artwork, and a 3,500-word essay by *Rock Candy Mag* writer Xavier Russell.

THE WORD FROM RC BOSS DEREK OLIVER
"By the late '70s rock music had fractured into various styles and genres. One experimental branch was labelled pomp rock, where finely honed sounds were bound together by a developed sense of melody and a keen feel for great songwriting. Kansas, Styx, Starcastle, Saga, and Trillion led the way, with Zon gliding in their slipstream, always taking their craft seriously and making sure that musicality, muscle and melody were at the forefront of every move. 'Astral Projector' is a stellar example of an era and a musical style that's sadly missed these days."

Buy these albums and tons of other great releases at *www.rockcandyrecords.com*

ROCK CANDY PICKS

THE STUFF THAT'S GRABBED OUR ATTENTION



RUSH 'Permanent Waves'

(UNIVERSAL)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
This is the release that fired Rush into a new dimension. The Canuck three piece's seventh studio album was issued in 1980 and saw bassist/vocalist Geddy Lee, guitarist Alex Lifeson, and drummer Neil Peart revamping their sound for a new decade. Leaving behind their traditional sword and sorcery lyrics and obtuse song structures, Rush streamlined their thoughts and sound in search of a newer, bigger audience. The plan worked to perfection as 'Permanent Waves' became the first Rush album to go Top Five in both the US and the UK. After 40 years it now receives a wash and brush up.

WHAT GUITARIST ALEX LIFESON SAYS
"I went through a period where I couldn't listen to 'Permanent Waves'. I was really disappointed. It didn't seem like there was anything new or fresh about it. But then I started hearing the album on the radio and thought, 'Wow, this sounds great.'"

ANY EXTRAS?
Rush have gone to town here, as they did on 2018's reissue of 1978's 'Hemispheres'. A double-CD version features a 2015 remaster of 'Permanent Waves', together with 11 live tracks from the band's 1980 tour – five from the Manchester Apollo, five from London's Hammersmith Odeon, and one from St. Louis, Missouri. All tracks have been remixed by original producer Terry Brown. A triple-LP version features an extra live recording from Manchester. Both versions include a book featuring archive photos and reimagined artwork from original designer Hugh Syme, who has also reworked the album sleeve. A super-deluxe edition features both CD and vinyl, together with a 40-page hardback book that includes a 12,000-word essay. There's also a 1980 world tour programme, a UK tour programme, lyrics to three songs handwritten by Neil Peart, backstage laminates, a double-sided poster, and a notepad that uses the letterhead of the studio where the album was recorded.

HIGHLIGHTS
The remastered album sounds brilliant and could easily pass as a contemporary recording. The live tracks, meanwhile, capture Rush's energy levels at the time to perfection. Not only do the band do justice to 'Permanent Waves' material like 'Spirit Of Radio' and 'Jacob's Ladder', but earlier songs including 'Xanadu' also shine with added vigour.

Malcolm Dome

Y&T *On With The Show – The Documentary*

(MEANSTREAK MUSIC)

DVD

Y&T
On With the Show
The documentary
2 Disc Set!
A true story of grit, passion, tough luck, glory, and the relentless will to rock!

WHAT'S THE STORY?
The 45-year-plus career of the San Franciscan hard rockers told in over four hours – counting all the extras – from start to finish with smiles on everybody's faces. As with Y&T's entire career the DVD is driven by ever-amiable frontman Dave Meniketti, backed up with excellent interviews with sadly departed drummer Leonard Haze (who died in 2016), and guitarist Joey Alves (who passed in 2017). Former bassist Phil Kennemore died in 2011, before he could be interviewed for this documentary. There's useful insight from management, later band members, producers, record company execs, and some of Y&T's many famous fans, including Sammy Hagar, Michael Anthony, Lars Ulrich, Don Dokken, and Greg Kihn.

WHAT FRONTMAN DAVE MENIKETTI SAYS
"Over 100 people were interviewed for this documentary and there were hours of old and new video footage that needed editing. It was a huge job to take on, but I hope that's made *On With The Show* fun and interesting to watch."

ANY EXTRAS?
Aside from the 143-minute-long documentary, a second disc features no less than 137 minutes of nine special featurettes highlighting the four original members, the band's fans, and Y&T's influences. Joey Alves's segment is particularly touching. He had fallen on hard times and had been forced to sell his guitars years earlier, but here we see those guitars returned to him on his birthday. There won't be a dry eye in the house.

HIGHLIGHTS
For many fans the highlights will be snippets of live action from throughout the band's career, some going back as far as the earliest Yesterday & Today days in the '70s. Some rarely seen promo videos will be much appreciated too. But what appeals to me most is the searing honesty and the startling good grace everybody shows given the many setbacks Y&T have suffered over the years – the departures of Haze and Alves because of substance abuse, labels A&M and Geffen demanding the band commercialise their sound, and the untimely passing of Kennemore. Given all of these body blows, the cheeriness and enthusiasm Meniketti still shows for his band is truly heartwarming. This is a must for any and every Y&T fan.

Jerry Ewing

Photos: Getty Images/Fin Costello/Redferns; Chris Nation/Rory Gallagher Archives

RORY GALLAGHER 'Check Shirt Wizard – Live In '77'

(CHESS/UMC)

WHAT'S THE STORY?
The enduring legacy of guitarist and vocalist Rory Gallagher, who died in 1995 aged just 47, continues to burn bright. This is an offering of previously unreleased live recordings mixed from original multi-track tapes in the Gallagher archive. I saw Rory on this tour and it was akin to a religious experience. He was capable of transporting us to places few other artists can reach. Yes, he was a blues purest, but there's also a masterful soulful – even gospel – tinge in his work that opened the door to a bigger, more expansive picture.

WHAT WAS RORY LIKE?
A very private individual by all accounts, in the company of his fans Rory was always thoughtful and considerate. I interviewed him in the '80s and was entranced by the attention he afforded to the task at hand. It struck me that, as this album title suggests, Rory wore the same clothes offstage as he did while performing. No airs. No graces. No bullsh*t.

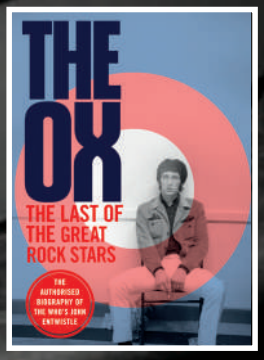
ANY EXTRAS?
Both formats of this album feature 20 previously unreleased recordings from four 1977 UK gigs performed in London, Brighton, Sheffield, and Newcastle. The formats are either a standard two-CD digipak or a vinyl version that consists of three slabs of wax. The latter should certainly entice the Rory purists out there! However, the real value of this package is – as ever with Rory – in the music. These extremely well-recorded tracks pack a real punch. Dare I say that they're better than any of his previous live releases?!

HIGHLIGHTS
This set is well balanced and packs in the vast majority of Rory Gallagher favourites. He was promoting the 'Calling Card' album on this tour, but the songs featured stretch further back too, and include some beautiful acoustic numbers. Check out the atmospheric 'Out On The Western Plain', as well as the hoedowns 'Barley & Grape Rag' and 'Too Much Alcohol' for a good indicator of the breadth of Gallagher's oeuvre. But if it's classic Rory you crave listen to 'A Million Miles Away', 'Tattoo'd Lady', 'Secret Agent', and 'Moonchild'. All are brilliantly crafted rock tracks underpinned by Rory's distinctive lead guitar, his emotive vocals, and band member Lou Martin's distinctive keyboard flourishes. 'Check Shirt Wizard' perfectly captures a golden period of Rory's career.

Derek Oliver

THE OX: THE LAST OF THE GREAT ROCK STARS

Paul Rees (CONSTABLE)



WHAT'S THE STORY?
Bassist John Entwistle tried to write his autobiography when he put together four chapters in 1990, but somehow never got round to penning any more. His death at the age of 57 in 2002 put paid to any hopes we might get to hear The Ox's own view of his colourful life. But his passing couldn't have been any more rock'n'roll. Entwistle died in a hotel bed with a stripper, from a heart attack induced by a long-term penchant for cocaine. It falls to one-time *Q* magazine editor Paul Rees to finish off the writing job and hopefully do Entwistle proud...

WHAT JOHN ENTWISTLE WROTE
"John Entwistle was born a long time ago. He spent his early years dodging dinosaurs and searching for a cave with just the right amount of echo... He chose the bass because, longer than the guitar, it was a much larger phallic symbol. When asked to sum The Who up in one sentence he said, 'The Who are to the rock industry what French films are to the movie industry, deep and full of messages.' But what the f*ck are they about?"

BEST BITS
Depends what you mean by 'best bit'. For me it's the fact that whoever authorised this account of Entwistle's life resisted the temptation to sugar-coat the story. Much of the point of reading a book about a rock'n'roll wildman is to live vicariously through their madness. Entwistle was sex, drugs and rock'n'roll *ad infinitum*, and you do get endless tales of the non-stop, coke-fuelled partying here. But it really wasn't all fun, as the swift deterioration of The Ox's health clearly shows. What is it they say? When the fun stops... stop.

HIGHLIGHTS
In the main, writer Rees does a good job of capturing Entwistle's rebellious spirit and 'couldn't give a f*ck' attitude. He also shows the inherent sadness in the man being involved with Lisa Pritchett-Johnson, a girl who, according to the bassist's son Christopher, "made friends with every c*nt in Gloucestershire" where the pair lived and apparently made John's life a misery. Where the book is less strong is on Entwistle the musician and an investigation of what made him such a force in The Who. It's written without the help of Entwistle's Who band mates Pete Townshend and Roger Daltrey, which limits how enthusiastic you can be about *The Ox* as a definitive account of the man.

Howard Johnson

THE INSIDE TRACK

QUEEN

WHITE LION AND **FREAK OF NATURE** FRONTMAN **MIKE TRAMP** FELL IN LOVE WITH QUEEN AT AN EARLY AGE. HERE HE TAKES YOU THROUGH HIS LIKES AND DISLIKES FROM THE BAND'S ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER…

"IT WAS 1976 AND I was 15 and a half years old when I joined my first band, Mabel, in my native Denmark. We'd often drive around in a car together playing cassettes and one day this odd little tune came out of the speakers. It was laid-back, weird and acoustic at first, but then revealed a dark rocky underbelly as it progressed. The song was 'Tenement Funster' by a band called Queen and I later found out that it was a Roger Taylor number that he'd written and also sang on. It really appealed to me because I'd grown up in Copenhagen with a folk music background, so recognised some of its musical heritage. But imagine how weird it felt to me later when I discovered that my first experience of Queen was so different from the way the band truly sounded!

"I soon found out it was from Queen's 'Sheer Heart Attack' LP from 1974, and when I got to hear the whole album, and discovered the real sound of Queen, I was hooked straight away. The band were about to release a new album, 'A Day At The Races', and I really wanted to hear their latest music, so I bought the album the day it appeared in the shops. I was so impressed by that record that I immediately went back and started investigating their earlier work. That meant I discovered 'A Night At The Opera', an incredible album that had really broken the band worldwide. I was amazed I hadn't heard of it at the time, but I was pretty young when it first came out.

"I ONLY saw Queen live once, but that night will always stay with me. They performed at the Brondby Hall in Copenhagen on 12 May 1977. As soon as the show was announced Mabel bought 10 tickets in the very front row for band members and road crew. I was right in the middle, directly in front of Freddie Mercury, who took to the stage resplendent in his harlequin suit. The band opened with a rocking version of 'Tie Your Mother Down' and before long everyone left their seats to pile down the front. I was right there in the middle of the action! "At the end of the set Freddie picked up a giant bouquet of red and white carnations and handed them out to the people at the front of the stage. I got a red carnation, which I kept in a glass until all the water evaporated!

"Queen had such a huge impact on Mabel that we decided to nick their idea of naming albums after movies. They'd gone for Marx Brothers films, so we decided to name our releases after Laurel and Hardy movies. Mind you, we only managed to use one title, 'Another Fine Mess', on an album in 1977!

"AFTER THAT night in Copenhagen I never got the chance to see Queen live again, because I was so busy with my own career. I was in New York when Live Aid happened in 1985, though, and watched them on TV performing at Wembley Stadium. Just like the rest of the world, when Queen came on stage that day I immediately remembered why I loved them so much. It was a new era by then, and a lot of people had forgotten just how amazing Queen were. But with that one performance they made everyone wake up and appreciate their power and genius once more.

"In 1988 Queen threw a party on the Queen Mary, a ship that had been repurposed as a hotel at Long Beach in California. I was introduced to Roger Taylor and Brian May, but never got the chance to talk to them. They were very busy, so it wasn't the right time to gush like a fan!

"What really pleases me these days is that my 13-year-old daughter has now discovered the joys of Queen. She went to see the *Bohemian Rhapsody* movie, came home and immediately began to play the movie's title song on the piano. It was a moment that made me so proud! The fact that Queen's music is being handed down to the younger generation is wonderful.

"THERE REALLY is no other band like Queen and no other singer like Freddie. He could make everyone feel like he was singing just to them, even in a packed stadium.

"For me, the first five Queen albums are peerless, totally untouchable, because they helped define rock music for every generation since!"

Mike Tramp interview by Malcolm Dome. Photos: Getty Images/Fin Costello/Redferns; IconicPix/William Hames

THE ALL-TIME CLASSIC – 'A DAY AT THE RACES' (1976)

"This album came out at a time when I was very receptive to new music. There's no filler material at all here, which can't be said for subsequent Queen albums. Everything is brilliantly conceived and executed. The band members were at the top of their game, setting standards no one else could hope to match, and for me it marks the end of the band's best period. In some respects it feels like Queen's final album to me, because they were never this consistent on record again. Whenever I listen to 'A Day At The Races' I'm transported back to the time when I was incredibly excited to have bought a copy of this album and simply couldn't wait to hear it."

THE ONE FOR CONNOISSEURS – 'QUEEN II' (1974)

"This is the one for me, because it's the album where you can hear the band laying down the groundwork for what was to follow. They were revving up their engines and showing everybody what they were capable of achieving. Queen were exploring so many different areas of music, and I think on this record you can really hear that they're enjoying being in the studio, taking full advantage of what could be done with the technology of the time. Listen to the backwards riff on 'Ogre Battle' and you just know that Brian May wrote it to be heard that way. You get so many young bands these days that find recording a bit boring. Not Queen. They sound like they're having a really fun time in the studio. Some of the stuff they were doing all these years ago still sounds incredible, especially when you consider that computers didn't exist in those days. What the guys came up with on 'Queen II' was done by being innovative, but also by rolling their sleeves up and getting stuck in."

THE ONE TO AVOID – 'HOT SPACE' (1982)

"Do we have to mention this album? I hate it, and don't even own a copy. You know how awful this is? I can't even come up with one saving grace for 'Hot Space'. All the songs are so bad, particularly the ones where there's this kind of pseudo-funky, clubby feel. This was an album where it seems to me that the band made the mistake of letting Freddie loose – and he really took complete control. That's the way it sounds to me anyway. I wonder if the rest of the band were even in the studio with him! Queen seemed to forget who they were here and get lost in this Freddie Mercury sonic nightmare. You can't tell me that Brian approved of what was being done! I'm sure that's why he started concentrating on his solo career at the time. That was his way of avoiding what was happening with 'Hot Space'. I still want to forget I ever heard this album. Please can it be removed from the band's catalogue?"

BEST FILM/VIDEO – *QUEEN MAGIC YEARS VOLUMES 1, 2 AND 3* (1987)

"I only have VHS copies of these three volumes and I think a DVD version is hard to find. As far as I can tell only Japan released DVD versions. Queen have always been masters of the art of making documentaries that delve into the history of the band and document it perfectly. Nobody has ever done it better as far as I am concerned. Anyway, what these particular products do so well is tell the story of the band up to 1986, which was the last year Queen toured with Freddie. You get a great insight into the band's first 16 years together after first forming in 1970. I remember watching these volumes with tears in my eyes the first time I saw them. At times it was really moving."

THE RARITY – 'QUEEN INVITE YOU TO A NIGHT AT THE WAREHOUSE' (1977)

"Last year a friend of mine came along to see me do a show in the States. I got him on the guest list and as a way of saying thanks he said he had a gift for me. It turned out to be this bootleg of the one Queen show I saw, the gig at the Brondby Hall back in '77 when I was sitting in the front row. Listening to this show brought back so many memories and it's a really good recording of the performance. One thing it did bring home to me was how different audiences were in those days compared to the way they are today. Back then fans would really listen to what the band was doing onstage and not go wild from the start, drowning out the music. What you hear on this recording is how people were prepared to stay silent when a song was being played before going nuts at the end. I think that was a great way to enjoy a band live."

THE INSIDE TRACK

MIKE TRAMP'S QUEEN PLAYLIST

'GREAT KING RAT' (from 'Queen', 1973)
"This is a masterpiece from the debut album – and it's a real breath of fresh air. For Queen to come up with something so strong this early in their career is just remarkable. Freddie's lyricism sounds brilliant, even if I can't really work out what he's talking about. The overall sound of 'Great King Rat' gets right to the core of what Queen were all about."

'FATHER TO SON' (from 'Queen II', 1974)
"This is a really great album track. I love the element of mystery in the lyrics when you first hear them, and I really appreciate how the song builds. Freddie gives such a heartfelt performance here that you'd swear he really was talking to his own son! This is a message that any parent would be proud to give to their child. '*The air you breathe I live to give you.*' It's a song for all generations and it speaks to everyone who has children as I do."

'TENEMENT FUNSTER' (from 'Sheer Heart Attack', 1974)
"As I said, this is the first Queen song I ever heard, so inevitably it's going to be one of my favourites. It has a certain folk style that appeals to me, because I grew up playing folk tunes on my acoustic guitar with loads of hippies around me. So I can relate to what Roger was doing here. I also loved the fact that Roger probably *was* the tenement funster mentioned in the lyrics. He was well known for loving a party!"

'TEO TORRIATTE (LET US CLING TOGETHER)' (from 'A Day At The Races', 1976)
"I love the fact that one chorus of this song is sung in Japanese. I made a point of memorising it when I was younger, and when White Lion went on tour in Japan for the first time I would stop people in the street and sing it to them, just to see whether it really made sense or not. Everybody recognised it, and would just say, 'Ah, Queen!'"

'39' (from 'A Night At The Opera', 1975)
"This appealed to me in the same way as 'Tenement Funster', because again it had that folky style. Mind you, I should really hate this song, because it inspired Mabel to write a number called 'Boom Boom', which we performed as the Danish entry for the Eurovision Song Contest back in 1978. I'm still trying to live that one down! It's a mistake that will forever haunt me!"

THREE TRACKS TO AVOID

'DON'T TRY SO HARD' (from 'Innuendo', 1991)
"You know how Queen songs usually sound like they've been carefully and meticulously crafted well before the band went into the studio to record them? Sadly, this one sounds like it was hastily thrown together in 10 minutes flat after a soundcheck."

'BODY LANGUAGE' (from 'Hot Space', 1982)
"You can pick any song from 'Hot Space' and put it on a list of Queen's worst moments, but I decided to go for this. It's only because Freddie's voice is so distinctive that the song comes across as having anything to do with Queen, really. Seriously, what were the other three thinking allowing Freddie to do this?"

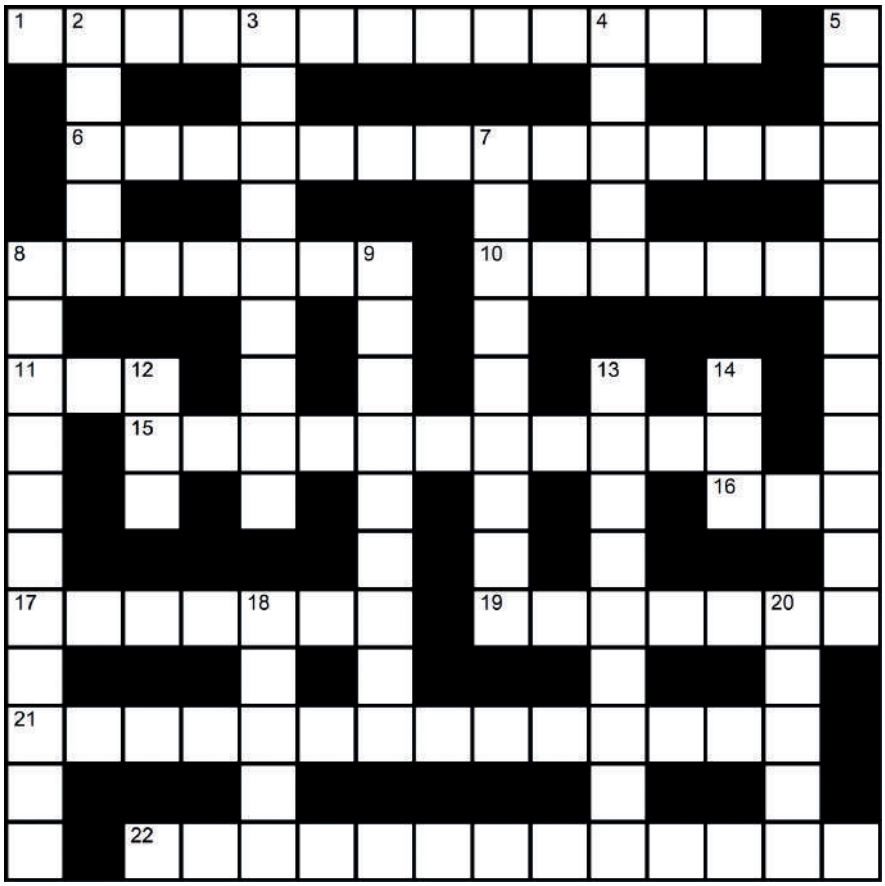
'DELILAH' (from 'Innuendo', 1991)
"How do you expect me to relate to a song Freddie wrote about his f*cking cat? For me this song represents the worst of Mr Mercury. As far as I'm concerned Freddie was at his finest when he had long black hair and was a true rock god. 'Delilah' sounds like something that was recorded long after those days had disappeared."

Photos: Getty Images/Anwar Hussein; Getty Images/Michael Ochs Archives

Queen photographed in London, 8 September 1976. Clockwise from top: John Deacon (bass), Freddie Mercury (vocals and piano), Roger Taylor (drums), Brian May (guitar)

CROSSWORD

Embrace the rock'n'roll show off in you. Go ahead and beat the *Rock Candy Mag* crossword into submission…



The *Rock Candy Mag* crossword is compiled by former *Kerrang!* writer **Jason Arnopp**, whose book *From The Front Lines Of Rock* gathers the highlights from his career in journalism. Featuring vintage interviews with the likes of Iron Maiden, Metallica, Kiss, Guns N' Roses, Bon Jovi and Queensrÿche, it's out on Kindle via Amazon sites worldwide or can be bought direct from Arnopp in several formats, via **payhip.com/Arnopp.**

4 DOWN: MANOWAR

ACROSS

1 Alice Cooper's third studio album, released in 1971. (4,2,2,5)
6 Swiss rockers Krokus concentrated on a solitary bad habit at any given moment. (3,4,2,1,4)
8 Opening track on Ambrose Slade's 1969 debut album 'Beginnings', released in the States as 'Ballzy'. (7)
10 The classic Gibson rock guitar. (3,4)
11 Red Rocker Sammy Hagar's 1976 debut solo album 'Nine -- - Ten Scale'. (2,1)
15 Axeman who spent three years in Guns N' Roses between 1991 and 1994. (5,6)
16 A 1981 Rainbow track for German lovers, 'Vielleicht --- Nachste Mal (Maybe Next Time)'. (3)
17 Nick -------, bassist first in Kyuss, then with Queens Of The Stone Age. (7)
19 Prog rock supremo Keith -------. (7)
21 The second album from Canadian thrashers Annihilator, released in 1990. (5,9)
22 Blue Öyster Cult's fourth album that featured the seminal 'Don't Fear The Reaper'. '------ Of -------'. (6,7)

For answers go to our website www.rockcandymag.com

DOWN

2 An outtake from 'In Through The Out Door' that featured on Led Zeppelin's 1982 'Coda' album, '----- Baby'. (5)
3 You could easily miss this track from Dio's debut 'Holy Diver' album. (9)
4 Surname of Manowar's muscle-bound frontman Eric. (5)
5 Legendary Canadian guitarist who's released just one solo album, 1996's 'Victor'. (4,7)
7 '--- Of -- ----', the last song on Magnum's 1979 'Magnum II' album. (3,2,4)
8 Asia's keyboardist, who was also a Buggle. (5,6)
9 Sound advice with a Bee Gees flavour from Bon Jovi in a lyric from 1985, "---- -----/*The hardest part is the night*". (4,5)
12 Bad Company reckoned we were living in a 'Dangerous ---' back in 1988. (3**)**
13 Uriah Heep wandered with a '--------- In Time' on 1972 album 'Demons And Wizards'. (9)
14 'I Saw ---' said an angry Warrant on 1990's 'Cherry Pie' album. (3)
18 Testament met some '----- Inhabitants' on 1988's 'The New Order' album. (5)
20 Neil -----, drummer with Demon since 2002. (5)

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OUT NOW

MOLLY HATCHET - 'S/T'

ZON - 'ASTRAL PROJECTOR'

ORPHAN - 'S/T'

SABU - 'S/T'

KIDD GLOVE - 'S/T'

KEEL - 'THE FINAL FRONTIER'

KEEL - 'S/T'

FOGHAT - 'FOOL FOR THE CITY'

FOGHAT - 'LIVE'

FASTWAY - 'TRICK OR TREAT'

AVIATOR - 'S/T'

ANGEL - 'WHITE HOT'

ANGEL - 'SINFUL'

ANGEL - 'LIVE WITHOUT A NET'

FASTWAY - 'ALL FIRED UP'

SHY - 'BRAVE THE STORM'

SHY - 'EXCESS ALL AREAS'

IF ONLY - 'NO BED OF ROSES'

EUROPE
'THE FINAL COUNTDOWN'

OZZ - 'NO PRISONERS'

GODDO - 'S/T'

GODDO - 'WHO CARES'

GODDO - 'AN ACT OF GODDO'

THE SCREAM - 'LET IT SCREAM'

RIOT - 'RESTLESS BREED'

ORPHAN - 'LONELY AT NIGHT'

NIGHT - 'S/T'

NIGHT - 'LONG DISTANCE'

SAMMY HAGAR - 'DANGER ZONE'

Y&T - 'EARTHSHAKER'

Y&T - 'BLACK TIGER'

Y&T - 'MEAN STREAK'

LEGS DIAMOND - 'S/T'

LEGS DIAMOND
'A DIAMOND IS A HARD ROCK'

LEGS DIAMOND - 'FIRE POWER'

COMING SOON

GIANT - 'LAST OF THE RUNAWAYS'

BLACK ROSE - 'S/T'

SABU - 'HEARTBREAK'

ONLY CHILD- 'S/T'

HEAVEN
'WHERE AGELS FEAR TO TREAD'

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